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# THE ROOTS OF EUROPEAN SECURITY

40 Years  
after  
the Yalta  
and Potsdam  
Conferences  
(1945)

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## CONTENTS

Chapter I.	<b>OPERATION ARGONAUT</b>	<b>7</b>
Chapter II.	<b>FROM YALTA TO POTSDAM</b>	<b>35</b>
Chapter III.	<b>THIRTY YEARS AFTER</b>	<b>55</b>
Chapter IV.	<b>CLOUDS GATHER OVER THE WORLD</b>	<b>75</b>



Forty years separate us from the decisive events of the Second World War. Over this period so many striking changes have occurred in the life of mankind that the war and its results seem at times to have receded into history. But those events are no mere history. A careful study of world developments in these past years and of today's international relations inevitably takes us back to the 1940s—to the carnage of the world war, to the joint decisions of the victorious powers which had fought against fascism, to the acts of international law of those years. For they have in a large measure determined the face of the world today. We are living in the *postwar* world. The lessons of the war, far from being buried in the pages of school textbooks, remain alive in the consciousness of nations and often provide the only trustworthy explanation of political developments in our time. What is more, these lessons, recorded in international documents and treaties and embodied in the principles of international law, lie at the basis of the present world order. It is by heeding the lessons of the Second World War that mankind has been able to prevent a new world conflict for four decades, although some do not openly acknowledge this.

**We live in a postwar world in which the lessons of wartime remain in people's minds. It is largely due to these lessons that they are able to prevent a new world conflict today.**

And we are not surprised at the incessant arguments over the main decisions of the Allied powers in the anti-Nazi coalition, decisions which determined the postwar political map of Europe, and not only Europe for that matter, and defined the basic structure of international relations for decades ahead. The chief place among them rightly belongs to the decisions adopted at the Yalta and Potsdam conferences of heads of government of the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain, held in 1945. It was these conferences that laid the groundwork for negotiations on the postwar setup of the world, drew conclusions about ways and means of preventing a new world conflagration, and adopted decisions that were to strengthen international security for many years to come.

The Yalta Conference ratified the principles on which an international body for effectively maintaining peace and security was to be set up; this body was the United Nations. It clarified the principal conditions for ensuring security in postwar Europe and for preventing new armed conflicts between states, namely, observance of the territorial structure on the continent, of the principle of non-interference in the

internal affairs of other nations, and recognition of the sovereign right of each nation to choose its own socio-economic system. The participants in the Yalta Conference agreed that the key prerequisite for safeguarding European security was to prevent Germany from committing aggression again.

Finally, the Soviet Union's consent to join in the war against militarist Japan was of great importance for the future of nations, particularly in Asia, and for the state of affairs in the Pacific theatre of war. This Soviet decision, as is known, created the conditions for achieving peace quickly and with the least number of casualties after the rout of Hitler Germany.

**Yalta and Potsdam laid the foundations for postwar Europe, and till this day these foundations help safeguard peace in Europe. Hence the continuing importance of those decisions of 1945.**

The Yalta decisions assumed more concrete forms at the Potsdam Conference. Although the divergences between its participants had increased by that time, the conference ended with the adoption of fundamental decisions defining the postwar structure of Europe. These decisions were virtually a summing-up of the relationships between the Allies in the war years and their views on the nature of international relations in the forthcoming period of peace.

The Yalta and Potsdam decisions were elaborated on in a whole series of treaties, agreements and protocols on specific issues. They include the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin, the "Eastern treaties" of the Federal Republic of Germany with the USSR and other socialist states, bilateral agreements adopted at Soviet-US and Soviet-French summit meetings, and, finally, the epoch-making Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which completed the process of postwar regulation on the continent.

Those who today question the significance of the Yalta and Potsdam decisions and of the international legal acts stemming from them are trying to present them in a false light; they either ignore the lessons of the Second World War or want to revise its results. Very often such critics are heedless of historical realities. And the realities consist in the fact that nations have managed to avoid a new conflict, which has loomed large all these years, mainly thanks to the fundamental decisions of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. Many stories and interpretations about the Yalta and Potsdam conferences have appeared in the West. Most of



them set out to belittle the significance of the conferences or distort their content, to present them as the cause of many of the complications in today's international development. The Yalta Conference is depicted as a "conspiracy" of the leaders of the three powers to divide the world into "spheres of influence"—a conspiracy which the United States and Britain allegedly wanted to repudiate after realising its "impropriety" and "political injustice" but were unable to do so because the Soviet Union insisted on adhering to the letter of the agreements which had been concluded. As to Potsdam, attempts are made to write it off altogether as "the most unsuccessful of all Allied military conferences" where at best the participants "agreed to disagree".

The published and easily accessible documents of these conferences and the numerous memoirs and research papers of the first postwar years convincingly prove that such assessments, to put it mildly, do not correspond to reality. Unfortunately, however, erroneous views persist in historiography as well as in the rhetoric of Western and Japanese politicians.

Those who today cast doubt on the principles of the postwar settlement worked out in 1945 not only wish to pull down the international legal framework for peace in Europe, a framework which took many years to build; they also try to sow instability and uncertainty on our continent. All nations should know this.

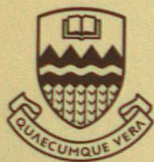
## CHAPTER I

# OPERATION ARGONAUT



The Great Livadia Palace in Yalta, where the Crimea Conference was held





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It was at the beginning of 1945, the last year of the Second World War. Although the approach of the finale of this most destructive and horrible of wars in the history of mankind was felt everywhere, far from all knew for certain how long it would last. The ruling clique of Hitler Germany, apprehensive of the oncoming retribution, was planning to bring about a split in the ranks of the anti-Nazi coalition, a split which Berlin hoped would prevent the collapse of the Third Reich by making it an ally of the Western powers in a new anti-Soviet crusade. The American headquarters, weighing the forces of the two sides, assumed that military operations in Europe could last till the end of 1946. Meanwhile the peoples of all countries who had experienced the incinerating flame of the war and the atrocities of the Nazi aggressors, and who were worn out with suffering, were impatiently waiting for the war to come to an end. Patriotic forces everywhere were doing their utmost to bring the hour of victory nearer. Breaking through the last defences of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Army steadily advanced on Berlin, the heart of the aggressor which had unleashed the war.

By that time the powerful strikes of Soviet and Anglo-American troops and the operations of Resistance movements in many countries had led to the final disintegration of the fascist bloc in Europe. Italy, Finland, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary were compelled to stop fighting on Germany's side and declared war on Germany. It was becoming increasingly clear that the Nazi leaders' desperate attempts to prevent a complete defeat of Germany were doomed to failure. With the successful offensives of the Allies in the Pacific Ocean Japan's position worsened: hostilities were breaking out closer and closer to Japan itself.

But the fascist powers still had large reserves. Part of Hungary and the *Repubblica di Salò* in northern Italy, which were under the control of local fascists, remained Nazi Germany's satellites. Nazi troops occupied Denmark, Austria and vast territories in Norway, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and the Netherlands. With a battleworthy army still at their disposal, the Nazi leaders sought to put up a stubborn resistance at the fronts so as to drag out the war and wait for favourable political changes. The Japanese command still had the million-strong Kwantung Army, fresh and well armed, deployed in the north-east of China (Manchuria). The US Secretary of War, Henry Lewis Stimson, reported to President Roosevelt that in the event of a landing in Japan American troops could expect an even fiercer battle than in Germany.

Shifting from one unrealisable plan to another, in the second half of 1944 the Nazi command, with Hitler's blessing, began to prepare for a massive offensive on the Western Front. Its main aim was to strike such a blow at the Anglo-American troops that the British and US governments would have to agree to separate peace talks with Berlin. Four days before the start of the offensive Hitler told a meeting of the commanders of the Western Front troops: "There has never been in world history a coalition of such alien elements pursuing such diverse aims as the one created by



our enemies." Thus the stake was put on a collapse of the anti-Nazi coalition, on a realignment of world forces.

The German offensive, which began on December 16, 1944, took the Anglo-American command unawares. Only a day earlier the British Field-Marshal, Viscount Montgomery, had written in his directive: "His [the enemy's] situation is such that he cannot stage major offensive operations." A few days later, however, it became clear that the German operation was aimed at crushing the main Anglo-American grouping. According to military historians, the Nazi offensive overwhelmed the Allies and threw into confusion all their military plans, leaving no option except to count on a speediest counter-offensive by the Soviet Army.

April 1945:  
Soviet and  
American soldiers  
meet in the heart  
of Nazi Germany  
after defeating  
the common  
enemy



On January 6, 1945 Churchill telegraphed Stalin, describing the situation as "alarming" and asking whether the British and Americans could "count on a major Russian offensive... during January." The answer came the next day: Although under the agreements reached by Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin at the Teheran Conference the Soviet Union was not obliged to take such actions, to fulfil its comradely duty it would mount an offensive not later than the second half of January despite the unfavourable weather. "I am most grateful to you for your thrilling message..." Churchill wrote to Stalin on January 9. "The news you give me will be a great encouragement to General Eisenhower because it gives him the assurance that German reinforcements will have to be split between both our flaming fronts."

On January 13 one hundred and fifty Soviet divisions mounted a powerful offensive along a 1,200-kilometre front stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Carpathian Mountains. The Nazi

command had to begin sending troops from the Western Front (600 km long) to the Eastern Front. Its plans on the Western Front had been frustrated.

[Such were the events preceding the Yalta Conference, which, in accordance with the practice of coding adopted in the years of the Second World War, came to be known as Operation Argonaut.

A symbolic name! Thousands of years ago, according to Greek legend, the Argonauts sailed to the Black Sea coast in search of the Golden Fleece. Now the leaders of the United States and Britain were following in their footsteps, as it were, in search of help and support from the land of the October Revolution, whose people and heroic armed forces had not only proved undaunted by the Nazi aggressor, but had also crushed its main forces in the great battles of 1941-1944—battles unprecedented in scale. The Greeks sailed in search of a miracle. Now the leaders of two major Western powers found themselves in the same role: they had discovered for themselves a mighty state which for a quarter century they had snubbed and even intended, as Churchill put it earlier, to "stifle in the cradle".]

**Churchill:** Can the British and Americans count on a new major Russian offensive?  
**Stalin:** In the second half of January at the latest.

But the Yalta Conference was something far more significant than the "discovery" of an unknown power. The grim events of the war led the political leaders of the Western powers to the conclusion that the Soviet Union, far from being an unstable country, was a great nation with a growing economic and defence might and capable of punishing the aggressor and exerting a decisive influence on world developments. Thus, the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems, which in the early days of its existence Soviet Russia proclaimed to be the basic principle of its foreign policy, now had to be taken seriously by its Western opponents from the point of view of a long-term policy. Unlike the tripartite Allied conference of 1943 in Teheran, which discussed almost exclusively military matters, the Yalta Conference dealt mostly with political issues. Herein lies its special historical significance. The conference laid stress, as it were, on the fact that the anti-Nazi coalition of the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain was based not on accidental or transitory motives, but on the vital interests of each of its participants.]

**The problem of the peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems was passing from the sphere of theory to that of practical world politics. This process could not be hampered by a divergence of political aims.**

The primary issue had to do with greater coordination of efforts of the three countries at the concluding stage of the war and solution of problems pertaining to the postwar order in Europe and in the world as a whole. The Soviet stand on these questions was well known. It consisted in the following: restoration of national independence and democratic systems in the countries liberated from Nazism; final elimination of fascism;



Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin—leaders of the anti-Nazi coalition—pose for the press before the start of the conference



The positions of the USSR's Allies in the anti-Nazi coalition were ambiguous. They, too, were interested in the speediest crushing of the Nazi regime's war machine, but they tried to preserve in the liberated countries the order that had existed there before the war, regardless of the changes that had taken place in public awareness as well as in the alignment of political forces there due to the war, to the period of Nazi dictatorship and to the subsequent liberation from it. At the same time both Britain and the United States, as could be seen from their actions, intended to consolidate their own dominant positions on the continent, taking advantage of the defeat of Germany and Italy and of the decline in influence of war-ravaged France. They wanted to see the Soviet Union isolated by a "cordon sanitaire" that would prevent the spread of "communist infection", just as Soviet

Russia was isolated in the early 1920s after the October Revolution.

A typical example is the policy pursued by Britain under Churchill. On the one hand, the USSR and Britain had signed a treaty in May 1942 on alliance in the war against Nazi Germany, and on postwar cooperation. The signatories undertook, among other things, to cooperate in the postwar period for the purpose of safeguarding peace and resisting aggression, not to form any alliances and not to participate in any coalition directed against one of the signatories, and to promote broad political and economic contacts with each other. But, on the other hand, as it became known in the postwar years, in October of the same year (1942) Churchill said in a secret memorandum that it would be a

The Yalta Conference: questions of the pattern of the postwar world are discussed at the Conference table



colossal misfortune "if Russian barbarism were to overlay the culture and independence of the ancient states of Europe." In another memorandum dated early 1945, quoted by Churchill himself in his memoirs, he wrote that the Soviet Union "had become a mortal danger to the free world", that "a new front" must be created against it, and that "this front in Europe should be as far east as possible."<sup>1</sup>

With the approach of victory US policy increasingly manifested opposing tendencies. One was toward maintaining cooperation among the great powers—the Allies in the coalition; and the other—toward imposing US hegemony on the other powers and

<sup>1</sup>Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, New York, 1962, Vol. 6: *Triumph and Tragedy*, p. 391.



on the rest of the world after the war. In any case the US ruling circles hoped to keep the liberated countries of Europe and Asia within the capitalist system, to strengthen US positions in the colonies and semi-colonies, and to prevent the spread of Soviet influence in the postwar world.

The divergence of aims among the Allies as regards the postwar world order was becoming increasingly clear. But, as already mentioned, hostilities continued in vast territories of the world and this remained the chief concern of the Allies in the first months of the last year of the war.

It became imperative to hold a special meeting of the leaders of the three Allied powers. President Roosevelt was the first to propose such a meeting. "I... count on our meeting again in the near future," he said in a message received in Moscow on March 18, 1944. His message of July 19 contained a more concrete proposal on holding a meeting, but hostilities on the Soviet-German front and afterwards presidential elections in the United States made a meeting impossible in the autumn of 1944. Meanwhile the question of where the meeting would take place was being discussed. Agreement to hold it in Yalta on the Soviet Black Sea coast was finally reached in January 1945.

The Yalta Conference of the three great powers, attended by Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill, took place on February 4-11, 1945, at the Livadia Palace, which formerly belonged to the tsar. On the eve of the conference, on February 2, Roosevelt and Churchill met in Malta. Experience had shown by then that the Allied powers could resolve major urgent problems successfully only on the basis of equitable cooperation. In Malta, however, Churchill made yet another attempt to persuade President Roosevelt to work out a joint Anglo-American platform opposed to the Soviet stand. Roosevelt refused to consider any political issues behind the USSR's back.

Was this political short-sightedness on the part of the US President, as is usually said in historical literature in the West? We do not think so. Displaying far-sightedness and sagacity throughout his political career and having an acute sense of political realism, Roosevelt was guided throughout the war years first and foremost by the interests of the United States as he understood them. His basic policy lines represented not some farfetched idealistic schemes of a postwar world order, but a well thought-out plan for promoting the interests of his country as a whole as well as those of the US financial and industrial circles, with whom he had close ties. It is true that Roosevelt was gradually coming to realise that the principle of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems would be internationally accepted sooner or later. But the chief and immediate objective of his policy was a maximum broadening of US political and economic influence throughout the world. No wonder the US President's views on many questions relating to a postwar order differed sharply from those of the Soviet Union. This is evidenced by his published correspondence with the head of the Soviet government, Joseph Stalin, and by the memoirs of those who were close to Roosevelt in those days.

The stand taken by Roosevelt in Malta did not reflect an erroneous understanding of the possibilities of Soviet-American cooperation; it was a calculated move. Roosevelt, wrote the British war historian Chester Wilmot, was "determined that American aid should not be used to bolster up the British Empire".<sup>1</sup> He was trying to use the war to extend the economic influence of American capital, which had grown over the war years. Even at an early stage of the war he told Churchill: "The structure of the peace demands and will get equality of peoples. Equality of peoples involves the utmost freedom of competitive trade."<sup>2</sup> In talks with British leaders the US President repeatedly stressed that he could not guarantee that the British colonies would remain British. Churchill once replied in private: "Mr. President, I believe you are trying to do away with the British Empire."<sup>3</sup> At any rate the global interests of the United States, in Roosevelt's conception, diverged from British interests in many spheres and he had no intention of being the cat's-paw of London.

The Yalta Conference began with a discussion of the question of setting up a new world peace-keeping organisation, which subsequently came to be known as the United Nations Organisation. Before the discussion, on Stalin's proposal, the US President was elected permanent Chairman of the conference in conformity with the Teheran precedent. The first sitting dealt with the general principles of building the world organisation—an important question since its solution would in a large measure ensure peace in the future, rule out the possibility of a new world war breaking out, and create conditions for peaceful cooperation of nations.

The Soviet Union's fundamental stand on this issue was already known to the other two parties. If the planned organisation were to be an effective instrument for maintaining stable world peace, Moscow pointed out, it should be founded on the principles of sovereign equality of all its members and of peaceful coexistence of states with different socio-economic systems. A memorandum containing Moscow's proposals, including those on the setting up of the organisation's directing body (Council), which was to be mainly responsible for the preservation of peace, was sent to Washington and London as early as August 1944. The principles on which that organisation should be established were discussed at the Allied conference held at Dumbarton Oaks (USA) from August 21 to September 28, 1944. The Soviet proposals formed the basis of these principles.

At Dumbarton Oaks agreement was reached on many but not all issues. Those pertaining to voting procedure in the Security Council, to the composition of the "original members" of the future organisation and to some other matters remained unresolved. The Soviet Union put forward the principle of univer-

<sup>1</sup>Chester Wilmot, *The Struggle for Europe*, London, 1953, p. 633.

<sup>2</sup>Elliott Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, New York, 1946, p. 37.

<sup>3</sup>Wilmot, *op. cit.*, p. 635.



sality for the new organisation; the United States countered with the principle of selectivity. For example, Republican Senator John Foster Dulles, who later became US Secretary of State, doubted "that it was wise to permit all of the small nations to express their opinion on all matters of international relationships", and said that "the holding of meetings between the three nations that now exercise power—Russia, Britain and America—was highly desirable; that these three could... provide the umbrella under which the other nations of the world could come in and between all hands try to work out a lasting peace".<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, Churchill expressed the same idea in Yalta: "The eagle should permit the small birds to sing and care not wherefor they sang."<sup>2</sup>

☐ The Soviet Union was thinking of the interests of all nations, big and small, sovereign or as yet under colonialism. This Soviet stand at the Yalta Conference was consistent with the basic foreign policy course the country had pursued ever since it came into being. The principle of universality of the international organisation, based on the sovereign equality of all its members, was in the end approved at the Yalta Conference.☐

The question of voting procedure in the Security Council was still to be settled. The task was to ensure that the procedure of work would prevent this organ from being used by any power or group of powers in their selfish interests against other states or as a means of one group of states dominating other states. Five great powers, including the participants in the Yalta Conference, France and China, were to become permanent members of the Security Council—there was general agreement on this question between the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union even before Yalta. Another six members of the Security Council were to be elected by rotation from among the member states of the United Nations.

The US-proposed right of veto in the Security Council, based on the principle of unanimity among the five great powers, met with no objection since it was clear that only such unanimity could ensure the effectiveness of Council decisions. However, the USSR objected to the American proposal that if any of the permanent members of the Security Council were involved in a dispute its voice should not be heeded. This proposal was fraught with the danger that the powers possessing a majority of votes in the Council at a certain stage could, instead of searching patiently for mutually acceptable decisions, resort to force in contravention of the principles and aims of the United Nations.

In December 1944 President Roosevelt, taking into account the Soviet position on this issue, proposed a compromise formula. According to it, the principle of unanimity of the great powers required for the adoption of sanctions should not be applied when deciding questions of procedure. This voting procedure proposed by Roosevelt was adopted at Yalta; sometimes it

<sup>1</sup> *The Forrestal Diaries*, Edited by W. Millis, New York, 1951, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Wilmot, *op. cit.*, p. 644.

arouses dissatisfaction in the West and, oddly enough, the Soviet Union is held responsible for it.

A great deal of time at the conference was devoted to a discussion of the German question, which was anything but simple. The growing military cooperation of the main participants in the anti-Nazi coalition undoubtedly facilitated agreement on ways of terminating the war. But there was less mutual understanding when it came to major issues concerning the future of the belligerents. And years later, what was at the time understandable differences began to be misinterpreted to fit immediate political goals in the West; such misinterpretations often have nothing to do with historical facts. They are a distortion of the events of forty years ago.

**The Allies were unanimous that Germany must never be in a position to violate world peace and that the German people must be ensured opportunities for national revival.**

If we look objectively at the events that have since passed, we shall see that they are sufficiently well authenticated so as to enable us correctly to evaluate the results of the work of the two main Allied conferences of 1945, which in many respects moulded the postwar world. We shall deal with the conferences proper further on. Here we shall consider just one factor—the presence already at Yalta of two diametrically opposite views on the essence of the German problem and on ways of solving it.

On the whole the Anglo-American programme pursued the aim of reducing Germany to a secondary obedient state (whether unified or divided into several states) within the orbit of Anglo-American influence. When visiting Moscow in October 1944 Churchill, for example, hinted at Britain's desire to take Germany's place as producer of commodities for small European nations. Influential circles in the United States were likewise eager to see the military and economic might of Germany considerably weakened and Germany removed as a possible rival.

The Soviet government regarded the rout of Nazism and German militarism as a means of liberating the German people and of bringing about a national regeneration within the framework of a democratic sovereign state. On February 23, 1942, when Nazi troops still occupied vast territories of the Soviet Union, Stalin said: "The experience of history indicates that Hitlers come and go, but the German people and the German State remain." Subsequently the Soviet government continued to oppose the tendency of identifying the Nazi clique with the German people and rejected a policy of revenge or of oppression of the Germans; it was guided by the desire to see Germany join the family of peace-loving European nations.

To root out Nazism with its expansionist ambitions and policy of medieval barbarism and genocide—this was the solution of the German question which participants in the Yalta Conference accepted. An indispensable prerequisite for effecting this solution was, as the United States proposed, the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany, and an effective instrument for seeing that the terms of the surrender were fulfilled could only be an interim regime of occupation. There was preliminary



agreement between the Allies on this score, and they readily confirmed it at Yalta. An Allied coordinated policy regarding postwar Germany was outlined on the basis of the principles of the democratisation and demilitarisation of the country. "It is our inflexible purpose," said the Communiqué on the tripartite summit conference, "to destroy German militarism and Nazism and to ensure that Germany will never again be able to disturb the peace of the world."

The Yalta Conference endorsed the documents drawn up by the European Advisory Commission (set up by the Allies in October 1943), documents which confirmed the future supreme power of the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States over Germany, and marked out zones of occupation on the territory of the whole of Germany as well as the area of Greater Berlin which was to be jointly governed. An Allied Control Council was to be set up in Germany to carry out these decisions. The participants in the Yalta Conference declared that it was not their intention to destroy the German people and that the bodies set up by the Allies to control and govern Germany would be active only in the period when Germany would fulfill the basic terms of the unconditional surrender of the Nazi regime.]

The signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco: a major item agreed at the Crimea Conference was realised



Was it only the three main Allies that were involved? Under what circumstances did France become the fourth occupying power? These questions require a detailed answer since false accounts of the matter (unsupported by documentary evidence) are spread with the sole purpose of concealing the true story.

Some British historians, for example, give this account:

Churchill insisted in Yalta that France should be given an occupation zone as well as a place on the Allied Control Council for Germany; Stalin was against this; Roosevelt proposed giving France an occupation zone without allotting her a place on the Control Council. What actually happened?

In fact long before the Yalta Conference the Soviet Union had been encouraging France in her desire to occupy a worthy place among the great powers immediately after her liberation. The United States and Britain, on the other hand, had for a long time taken a hostile attitude towards the French Committee of National Liberation (reorganised later into the Provisional Government of France), and towards General Charles de Gaulle personally. They obviously did not want France to enjoy equal rights among the great Allied powers.

**France must occupy a worthy place among the great powers. The advocates and opponents of this idea, facts and fiction.**

In August 1943, long before the start of France's liberation, the Soviet government recognised the French Committee of National Liberation as the "representative of the national interests of the French Republic" and expressed willingness to exchange plenipotentiaries with it. This was done in spite of protests on the part of Churchill, who thought it was too early to make a decision on that matter, and in spite of the obvious displeasure of Washington. The Soviet Union proceeded from the fact that the Committee's Chairman, General de Gaulle, unlike others claiming to speak for France, had from the moment of her capitulation been heading the anti-Nazi forces and guiding the struggle of the French patriots united around the Free French. A year later, at the Dumbarton Oaks Conference the Soviet Union proposed including France among the permanent members of the Security Council of the future United Nations Organisation. And the proposal came at a time when the command of the Anglo-American forces in Europe had, with Roosevelt's approval, virtually deprived the French Committee of National Liberation of the functions of civil administration in Paris (which had been liberated by French patriots) and in other areas of the country.

After the reorganisation of the Committee into the Provisional Government of France the Soviet government immediately recognised it, thereby exerting some influence on the United States and Britain in their decision to adopt a similar stand. It supported the Provisional Government's request to include France in the European Advisory Commission as a fourth member. Finally, during General de Gaulle's visit to Moscow in December 1944, a Soviet-French treaty on alliance and mutual assistance was signed. It was analogous to the Soviet-British treaty of 1942.

Could the Soviet Union after all this have taken a stand in Yalta which allegedly denied France's right to play the role of a great European power and prevented her from participating in a postwar settlement with Germany? It was not Moscow, but London and Washington that had to change their attitude with regard to France's role and place in a postwar settlement. Talking



with Stalin in Livadia on February 4, 1945, the US President said something to this effect: We shall have to discuss at this conference the question of giving France an occupation zone in Germany; of course, he added, this can only be a favour to the French.

In that same conversation Roosevelt said that he was no longer of the opinion that France should not be invited to the Allied Control Council for Germany. In the end decisions favourable to France were unanimously adopted by the participants in the Yalta Conference.

**How political legends are born. Who really wanted the dismemberment of Germany. The Soviet Union sought neither partition nor destruction of the German state.**

No less persistent is the fable that the Soviet Union insisted on dividing Germany into several states. For instance, the British historian Chester Wilmot writes: "The Russian view was... that they /occupying powers/ should decide at Yalta to partition the Reich into a number of separate states and to include a declaration to this effect in the surrender terms..."<sup>1</sup> Churchill, according to Wilmot, did not wish to undertake any obligations in this matter and Roosevelt suggested that the division of Germany could be mentioned in principle but no final decision should be made.

How did matters stand in reality?

The question of the partition of Germany was first raised by none other than Churchill in a conversation with the Soviet Ambassador on November 27, 1941, when he put most of the blame for the world conflict on Prussia and in view of this proposed liberating Bavaria, Austria, Württemberg, etc. from Prussian domination. Returning to this question ten days later, Churchill again spoke of the "dismemberment of Germany". The Advisory Committee on Postwar Foreign Policy, set up in Washington on instructions from the President, likewise came to the conclusion in 1942 that Germany should be partitioned into three, five or seven totally isolated parts.

In subsequent talks with their Soviet counterparts US and British representatives repeatedly returned to the question of the partition of Germany. Moscow invariably answered that it was studying the question, not wishing to complicate its relations with the Allies while at the same time adhering to the principle of self-determination of nations proclaimed by the October Revolution of 1917. It was the Soviet Union's firm belief that the solution to the German problem lay not in the destruction of the German state but in its demilitarisation and democratisation. According to Harry L. Hopkins, a close adviser to Roosevelt, at the Teheran Conference "Stalin was not enthusiastic about either proposal" on the dismemberment of Germany advanced by Roosevelt and Churchill.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Wilmot, *op. cit.*

<sup>2</sup>Robert E. Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins*, New York, 1948, p. 798.

At the Yalta Conference the leaders of the British and American governments once again brought up the question of the partition of Germany. At their insistence it was decided to set up a commission to study the possibility of dividing Germany. The participation of the Soviet Union in that commission did not mean that it agreed in principle to the idea of Germany's partition. The government of the USSR, as the Soviet representative on that commission emphasised on March 26, 1945, regarded the relevant decision of the Yalta Conference "not as an obligatory plan for the dismemberment of Germany, but as a possible means of bringing pressure to bear on Germany so as to render it harmless should other means prove inadequate". The Soviet interpretation came to be accepted by the other members in the commission. Thus, at the initiative of the Soviet Union the question of the partition of Germany was virtually removed from the agenda of inter-Allied talks. Addressing the Soviet people on Victory Day, May 9, 1945, Stalin said: "The Soviet Union triumphs in victory, although it does not intend either to dismember or to annihilate Germany."

Most of the time at the Yalta Conference was devoted to the so-called Polish question. Before examining it we must look at the basic approach of the Allies to all countries freed from Nazi domination. It was an approach based on the objectives formulated in the Declaration on Liberated Europe adopted by the conference. Western historians mention this declaration only briefly, regarding it as no more than an endorsement of the principles of the Atlantic Charter. In reality things were somewhat different. Whereas to London and Washington the Declaration on Liberated Europe was a mere proclamation of principles which might or might not be observed, depending on political considerations, to Moscow it was a guideline in accordance with which it subsequently pursued a policy that helped consolidate the sovereignty of the liberated countries and peoples and prevent interference in their internal affairs.

**From the Atlantic Charter to the Declaration on Liberated Europe. From the outset Moscow had a clear programme of action: the restoration of national independence and democracy in the liberated countries, the ensuring of conditions for the peaceful cooperation of nations.**

On August 14, 1941, on board the British battleship *Prince of Wales*, Churchill and Roosevelt signed a joint Anglo-American declaration, known as the Atlantic Charter, which defined the objectives of Britain and the United States in the war against Nazi Germany and its allies. In it the two powers renounced the seizure of other nations' territories, and promulgated the right of all nations to choose a form of government under which they want to live, with a proviso ruling out such right for the peoples of the colonies. The Atlantic Charter called for postwar cooperation of states on the principles of equality, for renunciation of the use of force in international relations and for ridding mankind of the burden of armaments. Brought into being in the wake of the anti-fascist movement sweeping the world at that time, the Atlantic Charter contributed to the formation of a broad anti-



Nazi coalition, and the Soviet Union subscribed to it at the Inter-Allied Conference in London on September 24, 1941, having expressed certain reservations with regard to the proviso on the colonies.

Earlier, in a speech on July 3, 1941, Stalin said: "The aim of this people's war in defence of our country against the fascist oppressors is not only to eliminate the danger hanging over our country but also to aid all the European peoples groaning under the yoke of German fascism." Explaining its attitude towards the Charter, the Soviet Union formulated the following programme of the anti-fascist coalition: abolition of racial exclusiveness; equality of nations and inviolability of their national territory; liberation of the enslaved nations and restoration of their sovereignty; economic aid for the nations that had suffered losses and assistance to them in achieving material prosperity; restoration of democratic liberties. That was the Soviet Union's clear and detailed interpretation of the Atlantic Charter.

In a speech on November 6, 1943, on the eve of the Soviet national holiday, Stalin defined the tasks facing the Allies: to liberate the peoples of Europe from the fascist aggressors and assist them in rebuilding their national states, which the fascist enslavers had dismembered; to give the liberated peoples the right and freedom to decide for themselves the question of their state system; and to promote durable economic, political and cultural cooperation among the peoples of Europe, on the basis of mutual confidence and assistance, with a view to rehabilitating economic and cultural life destroyed by the Nazis.

This was the programme which the Soviet Union upheld at the Yalta Conference, whose participants set forth their policies for the immediate postwar period marked by instability. The Soviet programme provided for coordination of measures to assist the peoples liberated from Nazi Germany as well as the peoples of the former satellite states of Nazi Germany in carrying out a democratic solution of their urgent problems, and to help the liberated nations to set up democratic institutions of their own choice. At the same time, at the insistence of the Soviet delegation, to the American draft (which proposed instituting a special mechanism of control over the consistent implementation of these measures by the three powers) an amendment was introduced which replaced such control by the holding of Allied consultations whenever necessary. The European nations that had embarked on the restoration of their statehood and sovereignty in internal affairs were thus freed, thanks to the Soviet amendment, of petty tutelage which could pave the way to dictation and even direct intervention in their domestic affairs. There had been actual cases of such intervention. For example, the landing of British troops in Greece on October 15, 1944 was carried out with the almost unconcealed objective of imposing on the Greek people a political regime they had rejected but suitable to London.

Thus, the Soviet Union had a clear-cut programme of action with regard to a postwar order in Europe. It envisaged the restoration of national independence and a democratic system in

the countries liberated from Nazism, the complete elimination of fascism, prevention of the threat of fresh aggression on the part of Germany, and promotion of cooperation among nations in the spheres of politics, economics, culture, science and technology. It is not difficult to imagine how remote these aims must have seemed then against the background of ruins and human suffering that the Nazi invaders left behind as they retreated under the blows of Allied troops and the anti-fascist Resistance. Advancement towards these aims was an epic in itself, for the peoples of Central and South-East Europe, having lived through grim years of ordeals, oppression by Nazi lackeys, war and occupation, were yearning for immediate and radical social democratic changes.

An embodiment of such aspirations in these countries was the patriotic fronts which united a broad spectrum of social forces on an anti-fascist basis. In several countries, including Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Romania and Bulgaria, there were big anti-fascist uprisings and patriots carried out combat operations against Nazi troops and their lackeys. As soon as the enemy had been driven away and people's power set up, the new government began carrying out major social changes, including an agrarian reform, nationalisation of industrial plants, confiscation of the property of traitors who had betrayed their own people, abolition of class privileges, etc.

All these processes took place in an atmosphere of sharp social struggle. Members of the former ruling circles, including industrial and financial magnates, fought against the masses and formed a bastion of anti-national forces; bringing dishonour upon themselves by collaborating with the Nazis, they had in fact been the support of foreign domination. Now they were frenziedly resisting attempts by the democratic forces to remove and isolate them and to carry out measures demanded by the people; they were trying to retain or regain power. In the end, however, power passed into the hands of the people's governments, as they began to be called. This was a natural outcome of the liberation war against the Nazi occupation forces and their lackeys on a vast territory of Europe. The democratic process intensified owing to internal requirements of social development, and in some areas owing to an acute need for radical socio-economic and political reforms.

In a number of cases the solution of these problems was complicated by the existence of émigré governments which throughout the war years had enjoyed the support of London and Washington and had expected to return to their countries and take over power after the expulsion of the invaders. This applies, for instance, to Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The United States and Britain, not wanting to see any social changes in the liberated countries, continued to sympathise with and give political support to these émigré governments. Certain quarters in London and Washington were harbouring the hope of restoring the infamous "cordon sanitaire" along the USSR's western frontiers, with which after the October Revolution of 1917 the



West had tried to fence itself off from the "red danger", having failed to crush the Soviet system.

That the West intended to attain its aims with an iron fist is evidenced not only by the above-mentioned events in Greece, which were instrumental in triggering off a civil war in that country, but by other cases as well. In Belgium, for example, the Supreme Command of the Anglo-American troops approved the decision of the government which had returned from abroad to disband Resistance organisations though they had made an important contribution to the country's liberation. British troops were put on the alert in order to prevent the masses from expressing their dissatisfaction.

For its part the Soviet Union upheld the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Central and South-East European states where freedom had now been restored, and defended their sovereignty and their right to decide their future and choose their friends and allies. The Soviet government wanted to see the consequences of the war eliminated as soon as possible; it wanted the nations liberated from fascism to be given the opportunity to build their future themselves. Even when hostilities were still going on the Soviet Command handed over administrative powers to the national authorities as soon as the situation permitted. And Soviet troops did not enter the territory of another country if the military situation did not require this, as was the case with Finland. The Soviet Union gave free aid to the liberated countries so that they could get rid of the consequences of fascist dictatorship as quickly as possible; it supplied them with foodstuffs and fuel, and helped them to rebuild their ruined economies.

The attitude of the USSR's Allies was different. What increasingly worried them, especially London, as the end of the war approached, was the question of establishing spheres of influence of the three great powers in postwar Europe. Stalin adhered to the principle of noninterference in the domestic affairs of other countries proclaimed in the Atlantic Charter, whereas Churchill in the spring of 1944 was already trying to find out how Moscow would react to a deal which would give the Soviet Union the "controlling interest" in Romania and Bulgaria in exchange for Britain having freedom of action in Yugoslavia and Greece. In October of the same year Churchill, having secured Washington's support in principle, came to Moscow with another plan. According to US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, Churchill proposed demarcating a Soviet and a British "sphere of influence" in the Balkan Peninsula in the following proportion: in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary—three-quarters for the USSR and one-quarter for Britain; in Yugoslavia—fifty-fifty; and the whole of Greece for Britain.<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, this plan was rejected outright by the Soviet side. Such an approach ran counter to the foreign policy principles of a socialist state. It is

<sup>1</sup>E. Stettinius, *Roosevelt and the Russians: The Yalta Conference*, London, 1950, p. 21.

not by chance that the final communique of the Soviet-British talks stated explicitly with regard to Yugoslavia that the right of the Yugoslav people to resolve themselves the question of their future state system after the war was recognised as inalienable.

In his memoirs on the Second World War Churchill said that in Moscow he had reached some kind of agreement as regards the Balkans. But no fact concerning this is recorded in any document or in the memoirs of persons who worked closely with the British Prime Minister during the war.

One wonders what prompted such distortion of the truth. Was it senile absent-mindedness on the part of the British policy-maker? Was it a desire to cast a shadow on the policy of the Soviet Union? Or was it a wish to blame "those treacherous Russians" for the failure of British hegemonistic plans regarding Europe? At any rate, it seems that at least an indirect justification was needed for the obvious inability of London and Washington to impose on the Soviet Union a postwar order that would suit themselves as well as the conservative émigré circles (which had failed to learn any lesson from the catastrophic consequences of the Nazi campaign in the East and continued to take an anti-communist stand), an order that would be odious to the mass of the people who had borne the burden of the war. This was particularly true of the Polish people.

**Strategists in all ages have regarded Poland of key importance for war or peace in Europe. The task was to help the Polish people to build a strong, independent and democratic country, thereby strengthening peace in Europe as a whole.**

After this lengthy digression let us return to Yalta, where the question of Poland's future evoked the most heated dispute. The reason was not that the issue was too complicated, though it should not be oversimplified either; the problem was that Poland occupied a strategic position in Europe. Situated in the North European Plain between the Soviet Union and Germany and possessing considerable manpower and material resources, Poland had at all times been regarded as a strategic region both by those contemplating a new major conflict in Europe and by those determined to make Europe a continent of peace at last.

As is known, over a long period the Polish people had been deprived of their state and their territory had been divided between the neighbouring monarchies—Russian, German and Austro-Hungarian. The October Revolution of 1917 in Russia and the defeat of Germany and Austria-Hungary in the First World War enabled the Polish people to regain their statehood. But the Polish rulers of those days were dissatisfied with the frontiers of the new state, established at Versailles. With the interests of the big landowners in mind and instigated by the West, the government of Poland started a war of conquest against the young Soviet republic. While it did not achieve all its great-power objectives in that war, it managed to impose on Soviet Russia, which had been weakened by a civil war, an unequal peace treaty which gave Poland the western regions of the Ukraine and Byelorussia. On the eve of the Second World War



Poland was rightly considered a jail for millions of oppressed Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Lithuanians.

The history of Soviet-Polish relations in the Second World War was complicated but also instructive. The prewar Polish government, blinded by anti-Sovietism, turned down military aid from the Soviet Union and in 1939 refused to let Soviet troops pass through its territory to take part in a war against Nazi Germany. After the downfall of Poland under the blow of the Wehrmacht the peoples of Western Byelorussia and Western Ukraine reunited with Soviet Byelorussia and the Soviet Ukraine. On July 30, 1941 the Soviet government signed an agreement with the émigré Polish government on cooperation in the war against Germany; in keeping with the agreement national Polish military units began to be formed on Soviet territory which were to fight against Germany. But these units were withdrawn from the USSR on orders from the émigré Polish government, which also demanded that the decision of the Byelorussian and Ukrainian population in the border areas to be reunited with Soviet Byelorussia and Soviet Ukraine be declared invalid. The émigré government instigated an outburst of anti-Soviet propaganda.

On April 25, 1943 Moscow was compelled to break off relations with the émigré government of Poland, which, as experience had shown, was alien to its own people and failed to realise the need for complete mutual understanding with the Soviet Union. Just as it had been impossible to defend Poland in 1939 without such understanding and without the Soviet Union, it was impossible now to liberate Poland from the Nazi enslavers, who had laid the country waste and killed every third Pole. The rupture between Moscow and the émigré centre, however, did not and could not mean a rift between the Soviet and Polish peoples. In accordance with the request of the Polish patriots, in the spring of 1943 there began to be formed the Thaddeus Kosciuszko Polish Division, which subsequently grew into the First and Second Polish Armies and took an active part in combat operations on the Soviet-German front.

The Soviet government, as already noted, held a clear-cut and principled stand on the Polish question. It invariably stood for the establishment after the war of an independent, democratic and strong Polish state. Soviet intentions, as was officially announced, included the conduct of a policy towards Poland "based on stable good-neighbourly relations and mutual respect, and, if the Polish people wished it, on an alliance for mutual assistance". A statement issued by the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs on July 26, 1944, after the Soviet Army had entered Polish territory, again emphasised that the USSR's aim was "to rout the Nazi armies and help the Polish people to liberate themselves from the yoke of the Nazi invaders and to rebuild an independent, strong and democratic Poland". In this case Moscow, while following the general principles of internationalism characteristic of Soviet policy as a whole, had in mind its own national security. Over the centuries Poland had been like a corridor through which enemies had crossed over to Russia. That is why for security reasons the

Soviet Union wanted to have on its western border a strong Polish state capable on its own of slamming the door of that corridor shut. Some 600,000 Soviet soldiers fell in battles for such a Poland; they would have laid down their lives for nothing if the Soviet Union had not taken a firm and principled course towards promoting friendship between the Polish and Soviet peoples.

*In the final analysis it was not political manoeuvres but the realities of life that dictated the substance of the Yalta agreements on Poland.*

At the Yalta talks the Soviet side considered that a strengthening of the Polish state would help to secure peace in Europe as a whole. To this end it was necessary that the Polish people should have historically justifiable and inviolable frontiers, for in the course of history the territory of Poland had more than once been remapped. As the eastern frontier of Poland the Soviet government proposed taking the "Curzon Line", approved way back in 1919 by the Allies in the First World War when drafting the Versailles Peace Treaty with vanquished Germany. This is an ethnically fair border between the two countries, but the Polish government of those days did not agree with it and succeeded in 1921 in annexing parts of Ukrainian and Byelorussian lands. The USSR proposed demarcating the western border of Poland along the Oder and Lusatian Neisse rivers, along which lie ancient Polish lands and from which the Polish people were driven away in past centuries by German conquerors. The Western powers agreed with these proposals in principle as early as 1943 at the Teheran Conference.

Having failed to reach agreement with the Polish émigré government in London, which was conducting a chauvinist anti-Soviet campaign, Moscow established, without difficulty, good relations with the *Krajowa Rada Narodowa*—a kind of underground parliament that united Polish democratic and progressive circles both in Nazi-occupied Poland and abroad.

London and Washington turned a blind eye to the émigré Polish government's hostile stand towards Moscow, their ally, and insisted that all power in liberated Poland should be transferred to that government. For its part the émigré government, which did not object to advancing the Polish frontier westwards, refused to recognise the "Curzon Line" as a basis for the Soviet-Polish border and demanded that British and American troops, as well as Polish troops under its command, should be stationed in the liberated areas of Poland.

The Soviet Army, together with which the *Wojsko Polskie* (Polish Army) fought successfully, won the fierce battles of June-July 1944 and entered Polish territory. On July 26 an agreement was signed between the Soviet government and the Polish Committee for National Liberation (PCNL), the plenipotentiary body of the *Krajowa Rada Narodowa*; the PCNL operated on Polish territory and the agreement recognised its authority in the liberated areas of Poland. At the request of the Western Allies a delegation of the London émigré government of Poland came to Moscow for talks with the PCNL. The talks were a failure



because the émigré government insisted on preserving the Polish constitution of 1935, which was rejected by the *Krajowa Rada Narodowa*, and because it refused to recognise the "Curzon Line". In October 1944 new talks were held in Moscow between the head of the London-based Polish government, M. Mikolajczyk, and PCNL representatives, with the participation of Soviet leaders and Churchill, who had come to Moscow. Again no agreement was reached: the émigré government now insisted on a redrawing of the Soviet-Polish frontier established along the "Curzon Line" and recognised in principle by the United States and Britain.

It is pertinent here to mention one more circumstance.

Stalin's message of December 27, 1944 to President Roosevelt pointed out: "A number of things that have taken place since Mr. Mikolajczyk's last visit to Moscow, in particular the wireless correspondence with the Mikolajczyk government, which we found on terrorists arrested in Poland—underground agents of the émigré government—demonstrate beyond all doubt that Mr. Mikolajczyk's talks with the Polish National Committee served to cover up those elements who, behind Mr. Mikolajczyk's back, had been engaged in terror against Soviet officers and soldiers in Poland. We cannot tolerate a situation in which terrorists, instigated by Polish émigrés, assassinate Red Army soldiers and officers in Poland, wage a criminal struggle against the Soviet forces engaged in liberating Poland and directly aid our enemies, with whom they are virtually in league." This Soviet stand, as Churchill was to say later in connection with issues discussed at Yalta, "did not go 'beyond the limits of what is reasonable and just', for Russia had 'the right of reassurance against future attacks from the West'".<sup>1</sup>

While the émigré government was losing the confidence of the people in Poland and was, moreover, creating the threat of a civil war in the rear of the Soviet troops, the Polish Committee for National Liberation was scoring major successes in strengthening the Polish State and in the practical implementation of important measures, above all, a land reform in favour of the peasants. This increased its prestige among the people at large, the broad popular masses in Poland. In late 1944 and early 1945 the PCNL was reorganised into the Polish Provisional National Government, which was soon afterwards recognised by the Soviet Union on the grounds that the PCNL had given the Allies significant help in the fight against Nazi Germany. In recognising it the USSR did not rule out the possibility in future of facilitating the formation of a broadly-based Polish government which would include, above all, representatives of the forces operating in the territory of Poland as well as Polish leaders living in Britain at the time.

At the Yalta Conference the question of Poland's frontiers did not arouse much controversy. It was decided that the Soviet-Polish frontier should be drawn with account taken of national

<sup>1</sup>Wilmot, *op. cit.* p. 629.

features, i.e., mainly along the "Curzon Line" with deviations from it in some areas of 5 to 8 kilometres in favour of Poland. The Soviet proposal to mark the western border of Poland along the Oder and Neisse rivers was supported in principle by Britain and the United States. But since they doubted whether Poland would be able to develop the resources of that territory, the final decision on the size of the area to be added to Poland's territory in the north and in the west was postponed to a later date.

The discussions on the composition of the future Polish government aroused much controversy. The American and British delegations at first tried to ignore the government formed on Polish soil and regarded the London-based émigré government as the only legitimate government of Poland. Realising the inconsistency of this approach, they then proposed setting up in Poland an entirely new government. When this idea too was rejected it was decided that the Western powers should recognise the existing provisional government in Poland provided it would be reorganised and free elections held in the near future. A new, reorganised Provisional Government of National Unity which would include Polish democrats both from Poland itself and abroad was to be recognised by the United States and Britain. That was how the Yalta Conference achieved the first step towards a settlement of the Polish question.

The discussions on the Yugoslav question at Yalta were less stormy but not without difficulties. By early 1945 the people's government already held strong positions in many regions in the country. As early as November 1943 the Yugoslav Anti-Fascist Assembly of National Liberation adopted important decisions on the formation of a Yugoslav democratic federative state. A National Liberation Committee was set up, which controlled a considerable part of the country. It deprived the émigré Yugoslav government of all rights and powers.

This, however, did not prevent the Western powers, especially Britain, from trying to strike a bargain between the people's government which exercised real power in the country and the royal government of Yugoslavia in exile. At the Soviet-British talks in Moscow in October 1944 it was decided that Moscow and London would promote a unification of the royal government of Yugoslavia and the leadership of the national liberation movement. On November 1, 1944 a Tito-Subasić agreement was concluded, according to which the question of a state system for the country would be finally settled after the war. But the Yugoslavian king, Peter II, who was in London at the time, sabotaged this agreement and pensioned off Dr. Subasić, head of the government in exile. The Soviet government repeatedly asked the British government for assistance in having the Moscow agreement fulfilled. Having considered the situation in Yugoslavia, the Yalta Conference recommended the immediate implementation of the Tito-Subasić agreement and the formation of a new government on its basis. Such a government soon came into being.

The Yalta Conference did not and could not undertake the task of determining the political regime in any European country.



Attempts to dictate conditions to the peoples who had just freed themselves from Nazi enslavement and taken power into their own hands were, if not doomed to failure, fraught with the danger of civil wars breaking out, as was the case in Greece. Such attempts would inevitably lead to a continuation of the bloodshed from which the nations of Europe had suffered for nearly six years. They rejected this alternative involving more fighting. For this reason the participants in the Yalta Conference, notwithstanding the divergence of opinion between them on matters relating to the territorial and political order in postwar Europe, adopted compromise solutions to the relevant problems with due regard for the new alignment of political forces. It was not the Yalta agreements that led to complications in postwar international relations, with which we shall deal further on. The better we understand the military-political situation in the Europe of those days and the true content of the Yalta talks, the less grounds there will be for looking for "mistakes" made by the Western participants at Yalta.

There is no doubt that the Yalta Conference, which discussed matters pertaining to the further conduct of the war in Europe and Asia, speeded up the rout of the common enemy. A communiqué of the conference said: "We have considered and determined the military plans of the Three Allied Powers for the final defeat of the common enemy. The military staffs of the three Allied Nations have met in daily meetings throughout the Conference. These meetings... have resulted in closer coordination of the military effort of the Three Allies than ever before." The successful offensive of Soviet troops and the close coordination of Allied action ensured by military consultations at Yalta brought the Third Reich's capitulation and Victory Day much nearer.

**The Yalta Conference speeded the day of Nazi Reich's surrender and the victorious conclusion of the war in Asia.**

The Yalta decisions were of even greater significance in bringing the Second World War to a victorious end in Asia in view of the Soviet Union's joining the war against militarist Japan. Talks on this issue were held between Roosevelt and Stalin on February 8. Churchill, on the US President's suggestion, did not attend the talks, and Britain did not take part in subsequent Soviet-American consultations on military-technical matters. The British side was later informed of the content of the talks and became a party to a secret agreement on the Far East signed on February 11.

Earlier, at the Teheran Conference of the three Allied powers, the Soviet Union complied with the request of Britain and the United States that it should join in the war against Japan and pledged that it would do so after the defeat of Nazi Germany. The United States showed special interest in this matter and later more than once returned to it.

By the beginning of 1945 the prospects of military operations in the Pacific were not favourable to the Allies. As the war

approached Japan itself the Americans came up against fiercer and fiercer resistance on the part of the enemy. In late 1944 Japanese troops inflicted a serious defeat on the Chiang Kai-shek armies and advanced deep into China to set up a base on the mainland from where they could continue the war should they lose the last of their island bastions in the Pacific. Washington and London knew full well that without help from the USSR they would have to sustain heavy losses before a victory over Japan could be won. Churchill had estimated that the price of victory over Japan would be about one and a half million dead and wounded. The US command believed that "without Russia it might cost the United States a million casualties to conquer Japan",<sup>1</sup> and that the war against Japan would last some 18 months after the surrender of Germany, that is, at least till 1947. These calculations were made in view of Japan's nearly one-million-strong Kwantung Army in Manchuria, which was well armed and did not depend on supplies from Japan. A powerful blow on this army—this could be inflicted only by the Soviet Union—was necessary in order to reduce substantially the combat capacity of the Far Eastern aggressor.

Washington had other considerations in connection with the USSR's declaration of war on Japan. Since Britain's participation in the war in Asia involved mostly operations in Burma and afterwards in Malaya, Washington concluded that Churchill was more interested in restoring British domination in the colonies lost in the war than in bringing victory nearer. The US ruling circles, on their part, hoped that after the USSR had entered the war, they would be ahead of their Allies—the British and the French—in liberating their Asian possessions. According to Western historians, Roosevelt did not want to see Indochina once again under French control and was planning to have the Indonesian archipelago, which belonged to the Netherlands, liberated by the American army.

As to the Soviet Union, its determination to contribute to the rout of the Japanese aggressors accorded with the desire of the Soviet people to establish a lasting peace as soon as possible, and with the wish of all the peoples in East and South-East Asia, who for decades had been victims of aggressive acts by the Japanese militarists. The Japanese government, violating the Soviet-Japanese treaty of 1941 on neutrality, shamelessly collaborated with Nazi Germany and was openly preparing for the armed attack on the Soviet Far East, having concentrated a colossal army on the approaches to it.

In the Yalta agreement the Soviet Union pledged to enter the war against Japan and fight on the Allies' side two to three months after the surrender of Germany and the end of the war in Europe. The United States and Britain guaranteed preservation of the status quo in the Mongolian People's Republic, i.e., its independence; and agreed to the restoration of Russia's rights violated by Japan's treacherous attack in 1904, i.e., the return to

<sup>1</sup> Stettinius, *op. cit.*, p. 269.



the USSR of the southern part of Sakhalin and its adjoining islands, the internationalisation of Dairen with provisions assuring the predominance of Soviet interests at the port (a proposal to this effect was originally made by President Roosevelt at the Teheran Conference), restoration of the lease on Port Arthur as a Soviet naval base (the base was later handed over to China—Ed.), and, finally, the transfer to the Soviet Union of the Kurile Islands, which play an important role in safeguarding the security of the Soviet Far East. For its part, the Soviet Union expressed readiness to conclude a pact of friendship and alliance with China and to help it rid itself of the Japanese yoke.

The Yalta Conference discussed not “spheres of influence” but the guarantees of a just world order. Its participants were guided primarily by a desire to strengthen world peace and consolidate the unity of action born in the years of wartime cooperation.

Thus, the Yalta agreement on the Far East gave concrete form to the general principles of the Allied powers’ policy set forth in the declaration of the United States, Britain and China, which was adopted at the Cairo Conference and published on December 1, 1943. The declaration stated in particular: “Japan will also be expelled from all other territories which she has taken by violence and greed.” It is incorrect to say that the consent of Washington and London to the restoration of Soviet rights in the Far East came as a surprise. For it had been previously scrutinised by diplomatic agencies in the United States and Britain. According to US Secretary of State E. Stettinius, “the Far Eastern agreement was carefully worked out and was not a snap decision made at Yalta”. Therefore, no dispute arose during the discussion of this agreement at the plenary session. “They [the Soviet Union] only want to get back that which has been taken from them,” Roosevelt said. As regards the agreement in question Churchill told his Foreign Minister that he must sign it because he felt that “the whole position of the British Empire in the Far East might be at stake”. There was complete mutual understanding on the matter despite diverging motives.

The Yalta Conference, as a careful study of its decisions shows, was by no means dominated by a desire of the participants to strike a bargain about “spheres of influence” in the postwar world. The “spheres of influence” version appeared later on, when some Western politicians and propagandist circles close to them urgently needed to explain and justify the going over to the “cold war” policy by two participants in the anti-Nazi coalition, namely the United States and Britain, against the third—the Soviet Union. But in February 1945, when the war was still raging and when military and political cooperation of the Allies was of crucial importance for winning victory as soon as possible, and the war-weary nations strongly believed that that world war would be the last, that victory over the militarists who had unleashed it would be a permanent one—in those days those at the conference table were speaking not about “spheres of influence” but about establishing a just world order.

That was the main point in the final document of the Yalta Conference—the declaration on “Unity for Peace and for War”.

Operation Argonaut ended on an optimistic note: the leaders of the three great powers affirmed in the declaration the need to preserve and strengthen in the forthcoming period of peace the cooperation that had developed between them in the war years. They emphasised: “Only with the continuing and growing cooperation and understanding among our three countries and among all the peace-loving nations can the highest aspiration of humanity be realised—a secure and lasting peace...”

How, then, did it come about that this solemn decision was not carried out in the subsequent period? We shall deal with the reasons further on. In this case it is important, both for the sake of historical truth and for the purpose of assessing the possibilities of international development today, to dispel the myth that at the Yalta Conference, owing to somebody’s wicked designs or because one of the participants lacked political farsightedness, errors were made the dangerous consequences of which are being felt today.

“Unity of purpose and action”, as the participants in the Yalta Conference formulated their position, was what made victory over the forces that had unleashed the Second World War feasible and certain. There had to be a machinery for maintaining this unity in the future and for the practical implementation of the decision on cooperation while settling any international problems that might arise. To this end the Yalta Conference provided for periodic meetings (three or four times a year) of ministers of foreign affairs of the Allied powers. Thus the practical basis for maintaining the proclaimed unity was being established.

Needless to say, this cooperation took place in emergency conditions of war. But was it not obvious by early 1945 that an Allied victory over Nazi Germany and militarist Japan was inevitable, whatever the price? So the important point here is not the emergency conditions of war but the experience gained in these conditions which could be applied in peacetime.

That was how the Yalta Conference was evaluated by the other participants as well. “The peoples of the world, I am sure,” Roosevelt wrote to Stalin in a farewell message on leaving the Crimea, “will regard the achievements of this meeting not only with approval but as a genuine assurance that our three great nations can work in peace as well as they have in war.” President Roosevelt told Congress on March 1, 1945: “The Crimea Conference was a successful effort by the three leading Nations to find a common ground for peace... I am confident that the Congress and the American people will accept the results of this conference as the beginning of a permanent structure for peace...”<sup>1</sup>

Those who would like to discredit the Yalta Conference and revise the lessons it taught referred subsequently to Roosevelt’s illness, which allegedly prevented him from making a rational

<sup>1</sup> Stettinius, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-285.



evaluation of the situation. But the pronouncements of the US President showed his deep insight into the future. In his last letter written just one hour before his death Roosevelt told Churchill he "would minimise the general Soviet problem as much as possible because these problems, in one form or another, seem to arise every day and most of them straighten out..."<sup>1</sup> Finally, Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, though differing from Roosevelt in his approach to world affairs, thought it necessary to show at the conference in Potsdam that to some extent he was continuing Roosevelt's policy—if not in substance at least in form. And in any case the most important thing was not Roosevelt and his personal views, but the international climate that prevailed towards the end of the war, the aspirations of the peoples for peace and their hope that the correct lessons would be drawn from the Second World War.

**The peoples were yearning for a just and lasting peace. British and US leaders, bearing this in mind, assured the USSR of their determination not to permit a weakening of the bonds of friendship and cooperation that had been established.**

The peoples were yearning for peace, not for new conflicts and clashes; they wanted a lasting peace based on justice, and it was from this point of view that they assessed the behaviour of the victorious powers. The heads of government of these powers were in no position to turn a deaf ear to world opinion. This was evidenced by Churchill's message to Stalin, sent after the Prime Minister's return from Yalta to London.

"No previous meeting," Churchill wrote, "has shown so clearly the results which can be achieved when the three heads of government meet together with the firm intention to face difficulties and solve them. ... I am resolved, as I am sure the President and you are resolved, that the friendship and cooperation so firmly established shall not fade when victory has been won."

Thus, all the participants in the Yalta Conference spoke of its great significance in their public pronouncements as well as in their confidential messages. Why, then, are some historians and leading politicians in the West today trying so hard to reassess the significance of Yalta? To this question there is a ready-made answer in the West: the Yalta agreements themselves may not be bad, but the meaning that the Soviet Union has attached to them is incompatible with their spirit.

But this is really quite a different question. To answer it we must look at subsequent international developments, above all at the results of the Potsdam Conference of the leaders of the three Allied powers.

<sup>1</sup> Stettinius, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

## CHAPTER II

# FROM YALTA TO POTSDAM



The Cecilienhof Palace, scene of the Potsdam Conference



Only five months separated the Yalta and the Potsdam conferences. But it was a totally different world when the leaders of the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain met on July 17, 1945, at their first session at the Potsdam Palace of the former German Crown Prince in Neuen Garten. The Second World War had come to an end in Europe. The Act of Military Surrender of the German High Command was signed on the night of May 8-9. Hitler was dead. The other Nazi leaders were either in prison or had committed suicide. In the Far East the war was still going on, but its outcome had been predetermined.

In correspondence among the Allies the Potsdam Conference was code-named "Terminal". This name did not quite coincide with the substance of the conference, for it had to do not with the end of a long road already traversed, but with prospects for the future that had opened up before Europe and the rest of the world.

By that time the main issues seemed to have been resolved in the course of previous inter-Allied talks. The San Francisco Conference which founded the United Nations had also ended. Yet a great deal still had to be coped with. And it was not only a matter of working out the details of agreements reached earlier, but also of assessing the changes that had taken place in the positions of the victorious powers and in the relations between them over the last few months. There were many changes, and dramatic ones, too.

The end of the war in Europe revived the West's old antipathies to the land of socialism. The task was to prevent these feelings gaining the upper hand.

Looking back now, we can say without the slightest doubt that the chief cause of the changes was the very fact that the war in Europe was over: the United States and Britain, like France, or rather their political leaders, no longer needed the military cooperation of the Soviet Union; their old antipathy toward the socialist state began to rise to the surface again. In his memoirs Churchill wrote with complete frankness that "the destruction of German military power had brought with it a fundamental change in the relations" with Soviet Russia.<sup>1</sup> But at the time he preferred to keep quiet about this. In his "Message to the Red Army and to the Russian People from the British Nation", sent on the occasion of Victory Day, May 9, 1945, he said: "Here in our island home we are thinking today very often about you and we send you from the bottom of our hearts our wishes for your happiness and well-being and that after all the sacrifices and sufferings of the dark valley through which we have marched together we may also in loyal comradeship and sympathy walk in the sunshine of victorious peace."

The Soviet leadership was aware, however, that at the beginning of 1945, when the Soviet offensive in Germany was at its height, Churchill ordered Field-Marshal Montgomery, com-

<sup>1</sup> Churchill, *op. cit.*



mander of Anglo-Canadian forces, to stockpile German weapons so that they might be conveniently redistributed among the German soldiers if the Soviet offensive should continue. And it became known subsequently that Churchill was having secret talks with Washington in an attempt to get it to stop cooperating with the Soviet Union. He admitted in his memoirs that he was demanding "that a new front must be immediately created against her /Russia's/ onward sweep".

The situation had changed in the American capital, too. The nature of the changes is indicated in the memoirs of James F. Byrnes, US Secretary of State at the time of the Potsdam Conference.

President Roosevelt died on April 12, 1945 less than a month before victory in Europe. His place in the White House was taken by Vice-President Harry Truman, a man with a totally different outlook and approach to world problems. When he was a Senator in 1941 he made this remark unsurpassed in cynicism: "If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany and that way let them kill as many as possible." Having taken over the presidency he told his entourage that "the Russians would soon be put in their places", and that "the United States would then take the lead in running the world in the way that the world ought to be run". At a Cabinet meeting he expressed himself even more eloquently: "If the Russians did not wish to join us they could go to hell."

Almost as soon as it was created, the atomic bomb became a factor in world politics. Washington's calculations and miscalculations.

Now that the war with Nazi Germany had been won (the outcome, as was obvious to contemporaries, had been decided primarily at the Soviet-German front), the new leadership of the United States showed greater hostility towards its ally—the USSR. Moscow was fully aware of this. Marshal Zhukov, who had been appointed head of the Soviet Administration in Germany, recalled that in May 1945 Stalin said: "Now that President Roosevelt is dead, Churchill will quickly come to terms with Truman." A few days later Zhukov received in Berlin Harry Hopkins, who had been a close aide to Roosevelt and was Truman's special representative in the initial period of his Administration. In the course of the discussions the Soviet side expressed hopes that the United States and the Soviet Union, which had found a common language in the difficult conditions of war, would be able to reach agreement on a postwar order. To this, Zhukov recalled, Hopkins replied: "It's a pity President Roosevelt didn't live to see these days, it was easier with him."

Washington and London sought to back up their new approach to international affairs, especially to relations with their Soviet Ally, with what they believed to be an "irrefutable argument", namely, the atom bomb. Though it had not yet been tested, everybody was saying it would soon be made. The Western leaders, intoxicated with the prospects of laying hands on the "ultimate weapon", whose manufacture, in their opinion,

was beyond the capability of Soviet science and technology, thought they could secure indisputable military superiority over the Soviet Union. "If it explodes," Truman said not long before the testing of the atom bomb, "as I think it will, I'll certainly have a hammer on those boys"<sup>1</sup> (meaning the Soviet leaders). Truman went further and restated the US decision to use the atom bomb without warning and as soon as possible. Vannevar Bush, Chairman of the Joint Committee on New Weapons and Equipment of Joint US Chiefs of Staff, said the bomb would make it unnecessary for the United States to make any concessions to the Soviet Union. In a memorandum of July 19, 1945, approved by Truman, Secretary of War Henry Lewis Stimson was still more blunt: he called on the United States to use its monopoly on atomic weapons to get the USSR adopt a political system that would suit his country. As we can see, Washington's

Posing for the press, this time in the heart of defeated Nazi Germany, are the leaders of the anti-Nazi coalition—Churchill, Truman (the new US President after Roosevelt, who died shortly before Potsdam,) and Stalin



ambition to remake Soviet society by means of a "crusade for freedom", which is cherished by the Reagan Administration today, has a long history.

Thus, already on the eve of the Potsdam Conference a mine was placed under the edifice of American-Soviet-British cooperation built up during the war years. That cooperation demonstrated feasibility not only of peaceful coexistence of states

<sup>1</sup> William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, N. Y., 1962, p. 169.



with different social systems, but also of their joint action in the name of the highest ideals of humanity. Such actions had helped to save mankind from the barbarism posed by Nazism. It was not the Soviet Union which had borne the brunt of the devastation of the war that had laid the mine.

The chief task the Soviet leadership set before the country in those days was the speedy rehabilitation and further development of the national economy. Accordingly, the country's foreign-policy goal was to create the most favourable international conditions for the fulfilment of that task. This meant, more specifically, elimination of the remnants of fascism, establishment of a just and democratic peace, peaceful settlement of all postwar problems, safeguarding of international security and disarmament to the maximum possible degree. It was therefore in the interests of the Soviet Union to continue the successful policy of cooperation in postwar international relations. Thirteen years after the end of the Second World War, in November 1958, Moscow sent a note to its wartime Allies which said that the Soviet government held in honour the community of countries which had taken shape in the struggle against fascism and which had been strengthened thanks to the sacrifices made by the liberated nations. The note stressed that the Soviet people cherished and would have liked to develop the feeling of confidence and friendship which had pervaded their relations with the peoples of the United States, Britain, France and other countries in the anti-Nazi coalition during the grim years of the last war.

Despite the sharp changes in the political situation the Potsdam Conference did take place. And it was a success. This was predetermined by the objective requirements of international development after the ordeals of the war—the bloodiest and most destructive war known to mankind, a war that swept the territories of 40 countries of Europe, Asia and Africa and involved multimillion-strong armies equipped with powerful weapons.

Wartime cooperation demonstrated its vitality. Cooperation is the objective need of postwar international development.

The three leading countries in the anti-Nazi coalition felt that another summit meeting was necessary. Churchill first spoke of it in his message to Stalin dated March 21, 1945. Truman's special representative, Harry Hopkins, told Marshal Zhukov in Berlin that much "inflammable material" had accumulated and said: "Churchill insists on meeting in Berlin on June 15. But we won't be ready to participate in such an important conference by then. Our President suggests convening it on July 15. We are very glad that Mr. Stalin agrees with us."<sup>1</sup>

Why was Churchill in such a hurry while Truman was not? Parliamentary elections were to be held on July 26 in Britain. The Conservative-Labour coalition that governed the country in the war years had fallen apart, and the question of which party would form the postwar government was to be decided by the voters.

<sup>1</sup> *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*. Jonathan Cape, London, 1971, p. 667.

Churchill, the Conservative leader, believed that he, the wartime Prime Minister, stood to gain in the elections from an inter-Allied summit meeting. What is more, he wanted the meeting to appear successful so that it would impress British voters, who, he knew, had sympathy and respect for the Soviet ally. As to Truman, he was in no hurry because the first atom bomb test was to take place in the United States on July 16. He wished to come to the conference when the United States already had the "ultimate weapon", which, in his opinion, was bound to influence the outcome of the meeting.

In subsequent years, to justify American and British participation in the Potsdam Conference, some people in the West spread the myth that the conference was necessary because "before the end of March /1945/ the Yalta Agreement had been broken or disregarded by the Russians in every important case which had so far been put to the test of action".<sup>1</sup> So, it was claimed, relations with Moscow had to be clarified. Such claims were disproved by the agenda as well as by the decisions of the Potsdam Conference. The meeting was needed so that a final agreement could be reached on such matters as relations with vanquished Germany in the political and economic spheres, the final demarcation of the German-Polish frontier, preparation for a peaceful settlement of relations with the former allies and satellites of Nazi Germany, and so on. The chief task, therefore, was to bring international relations back to normal after the chaos of the war. Some politicians thought that the newly founded United Nations could not tackle this issue: Article 107 of the UN Charter stated that it was beyond the competence of the United Nations and must be dealt with by the states directly concerned.

To take the final decision on the future of vanquished Germany the victors needed a joint policy. The Berne attempt to conduct separate talks with the Nazis cast doubts on the Western Allies' coordination of their activities with the USSR.

It is clear that the Western Allies went to Potsdam with anything but good will towards the Soviet Union. President Truman had declared in April: "I intend to be firm in my dealings with the Soviet government."<sup>2</sup> Translating, as it were, his intentions into action, on May 8 he signed an order whereby all Lend Lease deliveries to the Soviet Union were to be stopped immediately, which was virtually an economic sanction against it. In the same month Truman sent a message to Stalin saying, in the language of an ultimatum, that the United States refused to recognise the democratic government in Poland and objected to Poland attending the founding conference of the United Nations in San Francisco.

But it was in those days that Truman and his entourage came to the bitter conclusion that the United States could not win a speedy victory in the war in the Far East without Soviet assistance. US and British military leaders were convinced that Japan

<sup>1</sup> Wilmut, *op. cit.*, p. 689.

<sup>2</sup> H. S. Truman, *Memoirs*, Vol. I: *Year of Decisions*, N. Y., 1955, p. 72.



would not surrender so long as it had its "internal zone armies" in reserve. They also knew that on January 25, 1945 Tokyo's Supreme Military Council had endorsed a document stipulating that Japan should wage a protracted and stubborn war and set up an active defence system based on control over the territories of Japan itself and of Manchuria and other occupied regions in China. Truman himself admitted that the most important thing for him was to get Stalin's personal confirmation that Russia would soon join in the war against Japan.

The Potsdam Conference, held in the centre of vanquished Germany, lasted from July 17 to August 2, 1945. The long duration was due not only to the complexity and great significance of the issues discussed. The conference was adjourned for six days to enable the British delegation to participate in the parliamentary elections in Britain. At Potsdam the leaders of the victorious powers had first of all to adopt final decisions on the future of Germany, which had unleashed two world wars. The Soviet government went to Potsdam with the firm intention not to pursue a policy of revenge towards the German people, making a distinction between them and the Nazi clique. It proceeded from the aim of bringing about the democratisation and demilitarisation of Germany and the eradication of fascism and all its remnants, and considered it necessary to create every possibility for the development of Germany as a unified, democratic and peaceable state. In the Soviet government's opinion, the Western Allies pursued a different policy in this respect, a policy which was not oriented towards a peaceful future for Europe. A directive of the US President to the American command in Germany, dated May 10, 1945, noted that Germany was occupied not for the sake of its liberation but because it was a defeated hostile country. These matters had to be clarified once and for all.

One of the tasks at Potsdam was to settle problems that had remained unresolved after Yalta. It was also necessary to clarify relations between the Allies, on which a shadow had been cast by certain events in the last few weeks of the war. For instance, there had been an attempt on the part of the United States and Britain to hold separate peace talks with the emissary of the Nazi command, General Wolff, who was associated with such a sinister figure in the Nazi leadership as Heinrich Himmler. On behalf of the Nazi clique General Wolff contacted American and British representatives to find out about the possibility of conducting talks on the surrender of the German armed forces in Northern Italy. These talks had been going on for two weeks in March 1945 in the Swiss capital, Bern, behind the back of the Soviet Union, which had borne the brunt of the war with Germany. As a matter of fact, at the Soviet-German front the Nazi Wehrmacht had lost three-quarters of its personnel, tanks, artillery and even more of its aircraft. "And so what we have at the moment," Stalin wrote in his April 3 message to Roosevelt, "is that the Germans on the Western Front have in fact ceased the war against Britain and America. At the same time they continue the war against Russia, the Ally of Britain and the USA.

Clearly this situation cannot help preserve and promote trust between our countries." The Soviet Union had good grounds for demanding that Germany should not be allowed to hold peace talks with one or two of the Allied powers without the participation of the third so that the enemy could not sow distrust among the Allies. The Western Allies agreed with this assessment of the Bern incident, and the incident passed without practical consequences; but nevertheless it cast a shadow on inter-Allied relations since it contravened the obligation undertaken by the three powers at Yalta to conduct a coordinated policy towards Nazi Germany.

*In dealing with the question of Germany's future the three great powers gave prominence to the problem of carrying out a democratic transformation of life in the country and eradicating German militarism and fascism.*

The purpose of that policy was to create conditions in Germany that would not allow it to return to the former road of aggression. To give the people of Germany an opportunity to reconstruct their life on a democratic, peaceful basis—that was the intention of the Allied powers proclaimed at Potsdam. This intention was set forth in the conference's document "The Political and Economic Principles to Govern the Treatment of Germany in the Initial Control Period". The communiqué of the conference stated: "German militarism and Nazism will be extirpated and the Allies will take in agreement together, now and in the future, the other measures necessary to assure that Germany never again will threaten her neighbours or the peace of the world." The subsequent period showed that much in relations between the Allies came to depend on the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of this joint commitment.

It was not the aim of the three great powers to decide the question of the future state system of Germany. What was important to them, as they had agreed at Potsdam, was to promote a democratic reorganisation of political life in Germany, eradicate German militarism and fascism in all their forms, and disband the German monopoly associations that were mostly responsible for unleashing the two world wars. The political section of the Potsdam document was devoted to these problems. An important point in the economic sections was that the Allies agreed to treat Germany as a single economy; in particular, provisions were made for the setting up of central all-German departments for industry, finance, transport, communications, and trade. Though these decisions, unfortunately, were not carried out owing to their virtual sabotage by the Western powers, they played a positive role: they held back for several years the realisation of the intention of London and Washington, in the face of all agreements to the contrary, to split Germany into two states—an Eastern and a Western one.

It was with this plan that President Truman came to Potsdam. As Admiral William D. Leahy, who was close to the President, said in his memoirs, one of the proposals Truman brought with him was for the conversion of Rhineland into an independent state, and for the foundation of a South German State "com-



posed of Austria, Bavaria, Württemberg, Baden and Hungary."<sup>1</sup> There was no detailed discussion of this proposal after Stalin made this categorical statement: "We reject this proposal, it is contrary to nature: Germany should not be dismembered, it should be made into a democratic, peace-loving state."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, as a result of British and American objections, the Potsdam Conference failed to adopt the Soviet proposal to set up a Provisional All-German Government that would coordinate the activities of German bodies of power as well as economic and political measures on the territory of the whole of Germany.

The change of objectives in the policy of Western governments ran counter to the actions and anti-war feelings of the masses. This conflict left a mark on the Potsdam talks.

Looking back today at the proceedings and results of the Potsdam Conference and considering them as a whole in the context of subsequent events, we shall be right in concluding that although the three powers reached agreement there on the basic trends of their common policy towards Germany, the United States and Britain had by that time their own programme of action in Germany which radically differed from the agreed policy, and that London and Washington were mostly paying lip service to cooperation with the USSR while actually intending to revise the Allied agreements in the near future. Outlining the view of the US and British ruling circles prevailing in that period, the American diplomat George F. Kennan wrote: "The idea of a Germany run jointly with the Russians is a chimera... We have no choice but to lead our section of Germany—the section of which we and the British have accepted responsibility—to a form of independence... Admittedly, this is dismemberment."<sup>3</sup>

The future of vanquished Germany was, undoubtedly, a matter of concern. Even more concern at Potsdam, however, was caused by plans for a shift in foreign policy that could not be understood or accepted by public opinion in the West, including the United States. Moreover, it was not only that the masses were becoming increasingly active in regard to foreign policy; the main thing was that the war of liberation against the Nazi-militarist bloc had brought about growing sentiments in favour of major domestic changes. It is not a matter of the intuition or misgivings of the political leaders of the West, but the realities of the situation which they could not fail to perceive. Indeed, Britain's parliamentary elections of July 26 removed from power the Conservative Party headed by Churchill despite all attempts by its leaders to present themselves as the "creators of victory"; and from the newly elected Labour Government the mass of the British people expected real social and democratic changes.

Whatever the ruling circles of the United States and Britain

<sup>1</sup> William D. Leahy, *I was There*, London, 1950, p. 390.

<sup>2</sup> *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*, op. cit., p. 673.

<sup>3</sup> George F. Kennan, *Memoirs, 1925-1950*, Boston-Toronto, 1970, p. 258.

might wish, they could not get away from the facts. At the end of the war, wrote US Secretary of State J. F. Byrnes, "the hopes of our people" for continued American-Soviet cooperation "were high and there would have been great disappointment, if not resentment, had we not tried to work with the Russians."<sup>1</sup> And Field-Marshal Montgomery noted essentially the same sentiments in Britain: "The British people were completely fed up with war and would never have been persuaded to fight the Russians in 1945... any British Government that wanted to fight them in 1945 would have been in for trouble at home."<sup>2</sup> Chester Wilmot, a British war historian with no pro-Soviet sympathies, is even more blunt: "By and large Western opinion was almost as strongly pro-Russian as it was anti-German, with the result that, even if they had been inclined to do so, the British and American Governments could not have won public support for any policy which was designed to keep Russia in check or which provided for anything less than the extirpation of German militarism."<sup>3</sup>

In that situation, Washington and London, while contemplating a radical shift of foreign policy, could do nothing but wait. Meanwhile they were making careful preparations for the switch-over to different political rails and camouflaging its real aims in the hope of meeting with minimum public resistance. In the final analysis, as we can see, it was not the Soviet Union's departure from the Yalta line but a change of priorities in Western policy that caused the Potsdam talks to be protracted.

Possessing a "superweapon", Truman and Churchill signed agreements in Potsdam which they did not intend to fulfil. History's first atomic blackmail, however, ended in a fiasco.

It was obvious during the conference that both Truman and Churchill were going to revise all decisions in the near future. They had put all their stakes on the atom bomb. By the beginning of the conference they knew the conclusion reached by the Joint Committee on New Weapons and Equipment of the Joint US Chiefs of Staff, namely, that the Soviet Union "would have the secret in two or three years, but could not actually produce a bomb in less than six or seven years",<sup>4</sup> and that the United States would be way ahead by that time. Churchill once declared that the atomic weapons could fully restore the diplomatic equilibrium that had been disturbed after Germany's defeat.

The first A-bomb test was carried out by the United States over the New Mexico desert on July 16—a day before the opening of the Potsdam Conference. The next day Truman received this coded message: "Operated on this morning. Diagnosis not yet complete but results seem satisfactory and already exceed expectations." The President did not yet have adequate information.

<sup>1</sup> J. F. Byrnes, *All In One Lifetime*, N. Y., 1958, p. 389.

<sup>2</sup> *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of Alamein*, London, 1958, p. 340.

<sup>3</sup> Wilmot, op. cit., p. 713.

<sup>4</sup> Byrnes, op. cit., p. 283.



At the Conference table in Potsdam: the Western delegations are headed by new leaders: Clement Attlee (second from left) and Harry Truman (extreme right). There was less agreement, though the problem was a very important one—how to eliminate a hotbed of aggression in Europe

This was brought to him in Potsdam on July 21 by a special messenger from the United States. One American participant in the conference, Robert Murphy, wrote: "As Truman presided over the fourth day of plenary sessions, we noticed a decided change in the President's manner. He seemed much more sure of himself, more inclined to participate vigorously in the discussions, to challenge some of Stalin's statements. It was apparent that something had happened..."<sup>1</sup> In those same days Field-Marshal Alan Brooke of the British Chiefs of Staff noted in his diary that Churchill saw himself capable of destroying all the industrial centres and population of Russia.

The British Prime Minister suggested informing the Soviet delegation of the bomb so as to take advantage of it at the talks. Truman wrote in his *Memoirs*: "On July 24 I casually mentioned to Stalin that we had a new weapon of unusual destructive force. The Russian Premier showed no special interest."<sup>2</sup> The Western

<sup>1</sup> Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors*, N. Y., 1964, p. 306.

<sup>2</sup> Truman, *op. cit.*, p. 416.

delegations thought the Soviet leader had failed to realise the significance of the information imparted to him; they remained under this misapprehension for a long time.

Marshal Zhukov recalled:

"In actual fact, on returning to his quarters after this meeting Stalin, in my presence, told Molotov about his conversation with Truman. The latter reacted immediately: 'Overbidding his hand?' Stalin replied: 'Let them. We'll have to talk it over with Kurchatov and get him to speed things up'.

"I realised they were talking about research on the atomic bomb."

That was how the first attempt at atomic blackmail in history failed.

As we all know, the Americans dropped atom bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians. Official Washington claimed that the bombings were aimed at bringing the end of the war nearer and avoiding unnecessary bloodshed and casualties. But, as we have seen, they had entirely different objectives.





Neither strategy nor tactics required the use of the atom bomb. Indeed, the proposal to end the war made after the bombings was right away rejected by the military leaders of Japan. The purpose of the bombings was to intimidate other states, above all the Soviet Union. In other words, the US decision to use atomic energy for military purposes was meant to produce a diplomatic and psychological impact, and this has since involved the world in a nuclear arms race fraught with catastrophic consequences.

Europe saw the emergence of new political realities, namely, the people's democracies of Eastern Europe. The US and British governments refused to recognise them, fearing their policy of good-neighbourly relations with the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile the Potsdam Conference continued its work. Churchill was replaced at the conference table on July 28 by the head of the new Labour government, Prime Minister Clement Attlee. But his presence contributed nothing of significance to the work of the conference.

As was the case at Yalta, there was fierce dispute over the Polish question. The discussions reflected the varying approaches of the sides to the question of the future development of the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe. Following the course approved at Yalta, the Soviet Union was guided by the aim of extirpating the remnants of fascism and promoting consistent democratisation of the life of the liberated nations, with their sovereign rights being respected. The United States and Great Britain, on the contrary, were interested primarily in restoring in these countries the prewar political structures, irrespective of the changes brought about in the life of the nations concerned by the experience of the war years and subsequent socio-political development.

Could these factors be ignored? In Romania, for example, the men associated with the pro-Nazi regime during the war were obviously seeking in early 1945 to unleash a civil war and thus provide a pretext for Anglo-American intervention in the country. They were responsible for an incident on February 24 in which a working people's demonstration demanding the resignation of General Radescu's government, formed of representatives of the pro-fascist forces, was fired on. The American and British delegations raised the question of convening a conference of the three great powers to tackle the Romanian issue. But events developed faster than they could act. Under public pressure the Radescu government resigned. The king, frightened by the growing people's movement, following a demonstration by 800,000 people in Bucharest consented to the formation of a government headed by the leader of the Farmers' Front, Petru Groza. "The events in Romania," the Soviet daily *Pravda* wrote on March 22, 1945, "are of enormous political importance. The removal of Radescu's pro-fascist regime fully accords with the decisions of the Crimea Conference on the extirpation of all remnants of the fascist regime and on the setting up by the people themselves of democratic regimes in countries formerly dominated by the Nazis." This victory of the democratic forces was

portrayed by Western propaganda as a consequence of Soviet interference in Romanian affairs. But in reality Moscow was scrupulously mindful of the wishes of the broad public in the countries liberated from Nazism.

Immediately after the signing of an armistice good-neighbourly relations began to develop between the USSR and Finland. Contacts were broadened between the Soviet government and the democratic governments of Bulgaria and Hungary. In a special statement on Austria issued on April 9, 1945, the Soviet government said that it would "promote the abolition of the Nazi occupation regime and the restoration of a democratic order in Austria". On the basis of a coalition of the Austrian People's Party, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party a provisional government was set up in Vienna headed by the veteran Austrian Social-Democrat Karl Renner.

As early as March 1945 representatives of Czech Resistance groups based in London and Moscow, with the partici-

The dropping of an atomic bomb on Hiroshima by the United States in August 1945 marked the beginning of a new era in world politics





ation of authorised representatives of Slovakia, approved the formation of a National Front government of Czechoslovakia and adopted a policy document determining the country's development. The Tito-Subasić coalition government in Yugoslavia concluded a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union on April 11, 1945. Washington, London and Paris, on the other hand, delayed in recognising the new people's government.

Postwar developments in the countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are invariably depicted in the Western press as monotonous and resulting from dictation by Moscow. In actual fact, events there varied according to the internal logic of development in each of the countries. What was common to all of them was heightened political activity on the part of the democratic-minded sections of the population and a clear-cut course towards alliance and friendship with the Soviet Union pursued by the new governments.

Against this background Poland looked an anomaly, a deviation from the general trend.

Soon after the Yalta Conference, in conformity with its decisions a tripartite commission on Poland started work in Moscow. One of its tasks was the holding of consultations on the question of forming a Polish Government of National Unity. Under a decision adopted at Yalta this government was to be set up by enlarging the composition of the already functioning Provisional Government of Poland. But from the very start of the Moscow talks the American and British representatives deviated from that joint decision and virtually insisted on the formation of an entirely new government. Because of this disagreement the work of the commission was deadlocked.

Stalin: "To put it plainly, you want me to renounce the interests of the security of the Soviet Union; but I cannot proceed against the interests of my country."

The "new government" of Poland was also mentioned in the messages sent by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill to Stalin on April 1, 1945. In his reply Stalin insisted on the strict fulfilment of the Yalta agreement "because the blood of Soviet soldiers, so freely shed in liberating Poland, and the fact that in the past 30 years the territory of Poland has twice been used by an enemy for invading Russia, oblige the Soviet government to ensure friendly relations between the Soviet Union and Poland." Returning to this question in his message of April 24, 1945 to Churchill, Stalin said: "You evidently do not agree that the Soviet Union is entitled to seek in Poland a government that would be friendly to it, that the Soviet government cannot agree to the existence in Poland of a government hostile to it." In a message to Truman of the same date Stalin said: "To put it plainly, you want me to renounce the interests of the security of the Soviet Union; but I cannot proceed against the interests of my country."

On April 21, 1945 the Soviet government, accepting a proposal of the Provisional Government of Poland, concluded with it a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Postwar

Cooperation. The Treaty expressed the desire "to consolidate the radical turn in the history of Soviet-Polish relations in favour of the trend of friendly, allied cooperation that had developed between the USSR and Poland in the course of the joint struggle against German imperialism". The Polish question was discussed in detail between Stalin and Truman's special representative, Harry Hopkins, during the latter's visit to Moscow in May-June. Soon after that the tripartite commission on Poland reached agreement with regard to the Polish Government of National Unity formed on June 28. It was recognised by the United States and Great Britain on July 5.

The question of the internal system of the countries which had fought on Germany's side had to be resolved by the peoples of those countries. The forcible linking of this question with a peaceful settlement in Europe was severed at Potsdam.

At Potsdam the Western delegations insistently raised the question of Poland's western frontier, in particular its southern sector along the Lusatian Neisse River up to the Czechoslovak border. They suggested that the Polish frontier be moved many kilometres to the east and insisted that the issue of Poland's frontiers should be postponed until a peace conference was held. After lengthy discussions a decision was adopted regarding the frontiers that should be under the control of the Polish government. But the United States and Britain stipulated that the final demarcation of Poland's western frontier should be postponed until there was a peaceful settlement. A peaceful settlement with whom? Apparently with Germany. As we know, the peace treaty was never concluded, and the question of Poland's western border remained one of the main sources of tension in Europe until the Moscow treaty between the USSR and the Federal Republic of Germany, and then the treaty between Poland and the FRG were signed in 1970. Thus, the stipulation by Washington and London concerning Poland's western frontier had been a cause of tension in Europe for about 25 years.

Many complaints in the West in the postwar period had to do with the transfer of German populations from the territories of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The transfer was ascribed to the "arbitrary acts" of the Soviet Union and the East European states concerned. But it was explicitly stated in the Potsdam agreements: "The three governments, having considered the question in all its aspects, recognise that the transfer to Germany of German populations, or elements thereof, remaining in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary, will have to be undertaken." In 1945 this clause aroused no surprise or indignation, for it was still fresh in everybody's memory how the Nazis had used the German minority in Czechoslovakia and Poland to kindle the Second World War. The world's nations wanted to protect themselves against a repetition of such provocations with their tragic, bloody consequences.

Much attention at the Potsdam Conference was devoted to the question of coordinating the three powers' policy towards



those European countries which had fought on Germany's side but which had undergone people's revolutions in the course of liberation. President Truman demanded an immediate reorganisation of the governments of Romania and Bulgaria, declaring in the form of an ultimatum that diplomatic recognition of these governments by the United States and by Great Britain (which backed the US position) and the conclusion of peace treaties with them could only follow after political systems in their countries had been changed according to the Western model. He meant, of course, that they should remain within the Western orbit. But the increased pressure came to nothing. The Soviet delegation forestalled interference in the domestic affairs of the Central and South-Eastern European states. It was resolved that "the three governments agree to examine each separately in the near future, in the light of the conditions then prevailing, the establishment of diplomatic relations with Finland, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary to the extent possible prior to the conclusion of peace treaties with those countries." Thus, the attempt artificially to link the question of diplomatic recognition of these countries with their domestic order failed.

It was indicated in the Potsdam decisions that it would be desirable to conclude peace treaties with these states in the near future. To this end the Council of Foreign Ministers of the three powers and France, which was being set up as a permanent body, was charged with the preparation of the appropriate drafts and subsequently with the task of paving the way for a peaceful settlement with Germany.

**In the Far East war continued. In accordance with inter-Allied commitments, the Soviet armed forces dealt a crushing blow to the Kwantung army. Japanese military leaders' plans for a protracted war were frustrated.**

At Potsdam Stalin confirmed the obligation the Soviet government had undertaken at Teheran and Yalta to join in the war against Japan three months after the surrender of Nazi Germany. As early as April 5, 1945 Moscow had denounced the Soviet-Japanese treaty on neutrality signed in April 1941, two months before Germany's attack on the Soviet Union. The statement of denunciation noted: "Germany attacked the USSR, and Japan, an ally of Germany, is helping the latter in its war against the USSR. Furthermore, Japan is fighting against the United States and Britain, which are allies of the Soviet Union."

On July 26, after the Soviet Union informed its Allies that Tokyo had asked it to act as a mediator to bring the war to a close, the Potsdam Declaration of the United States, Great Britain and China was published; it called on Japan to surrender under conditions of its demilitarisation and democratisation. The militarist circles of Japan rejected these conditions and compelled the Japanese government to reply to the Declaration as follows: "The government attaches no importance to it, and we ignore it. We shall persistently continue our advancement in order to bring the war to a successful end." Thus, the adoption of resolute measures to rout the Japanese militarists was inevitable.

Fulfilling its promise exactly on time, the Soviet Union entered the war with Japan on August 9, 1945. This upset all the plans of the Japanese military to wage a protracted war because it involved in hostilities the mass of the armed forces that Tokyo still had in reserve—the 800,000-strong Kwantung Army and the troops of the puppet governments of Manchoukuo and Inner Mongolia with a total strength of about 400,000 men.

Soviet troops, together with the army of the Mongolian People's Republic (which joined in the war on August 10), within two days captured the whole system of the Kwantung Army's frontier defences, and another two days later approached the major cities in the north-eastern provinces of China. Large-scale offensives were also mounted by the People's Liberation Army of China and by Korean and Chinese guerrilla units. The Soviet strike foiled Tokyo's plan to shift the centre of its resistance from Japan onto the Asian mainland, which would have brought fresh suffering to the people of China.

The rout by Soviet troops of the Kwantung Army contributed greatly to the successes of the People's Liberation Army of China, to the formation of a revolutionary base in Manchuria and to the subsequent victory of the people's revolution in China. It brought about an upsurge in the national liberation struggle in Korea and Indo-China. Having got rid of the imperialist yoke, the peoples of North Vietnam and North Korea embarked on socialist construction. An independent Laos was proclaimed. Subsequently Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Pakistan and Burma gained independence. The victory over Japan paved the way for the mounting anti-colonialist struggle of the peoples in all colonial and dependent countries in Asia.

The Japanese militarists finally realised that they had lost the war. Events were moving fast. An imperial edict of August 14 announced Japan's consent to accept the conditions of the Potsdam Declaration. On August 19 the Kwantung Army surrendered. On September 2 a general act of Japan's surrender was signed on board the American battleship *Missouri*. Thus the Second World War, which had lasted six years, came to an end. The Potsdam Conference heralded its final stage.

**The successful conclusion of the Potsdam Conference confirmed that the powers which had cooperated against the common enemy in wartime could, provided they showed good will, find a basis for cooperation in peacetime, too.**

Despite the difficulties that the Potsdam meeting came up against and despite differences in the approach of its participants to the issues considered, the conference's joint decisions on major international problems having to do directly with the termination of the war, with the political and economic future of Germany, and with the foundations of the postwar order in Europe, are of historic significance.

The successful completion of the Potsdam Conference showed that the three great powers—the Soviet Union, the United States and Great Britain—joined by France, which had cooperated in the war against the common enemy, could, with the necessary political will, find a basis for cooperation in peacetime, too.

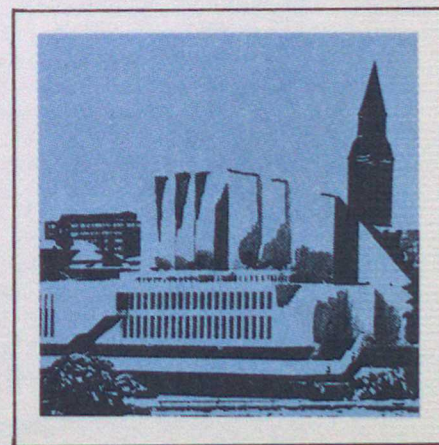


whatever the difficulties in working out such a basis. Notwithstanding all setbacks in international relations in subsequent decades, today we still find a note of optimism in the conference's joint conclusion that it had "strengthened the ties between the three governments and extended the scope of their collaboration and understanding", and afforded fresh hopes that it would be possible for them, on this basis, and together with the other United Nations to ensure "the creation of a just and enduring peace".

The Soviet government demonstrated at the conference its desire for such cooperation, having set itself the task of eliminating the consequences of the war as quickly as possible and of enabling the peoples to determine their future themselves. This is a fact that cannot be expunged from history despite the hostile criticism directed against the Potsdam and Yalta conferences especially in the "cold war" years. Nor can we doom to oblivion the fact that having adequately reflected the multilateral cooperation of the participants in the anti-Nazi coalition during the war, the Potsdam Conference proved the feasibility of peaceful coexistence among states with different social systems as an alternative to mistrust, conflicts and tensions which threaten to engulf the world in another world war.

## CHAPTER III

# THIRTY YEARS AFTER



Finlandia Palace in Helsinki, where the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was signed



Have the Yalta and Potsdam conferences proved to be events that ran counter to the general trend of historical development? Were they really responsible for creating difficulties and dissensions that led to the "cold war", as enemies of the conferences continue to allege today? Did they constitute an isolated episode in the history of the 20th century, an episode marking the end of a short and untypical period of military cooperation between the three great powers which were ultimately working for dissimilar objectives? Or did these conferences, their spirit and decisions, point to a real possibility for peaceful world development and represent a positive programme for such development, even though it is still largely unrealised owing to various circumstances?

The fact that disputes continue to rage over these issues suggests that they are not merely of academic interest.

Some people in the West no doubt would like to consign the two conferences to oblivion by paying as little attention to them as possible. Others, however, are not inclined to leave the conference materials in the archives; to them the results of Yalta and Potsdam are the primary cause of many of the difficulties and disasters that beset the world community today, a gross and irreparable miscalculation on the part of the US and British leaders at that time.

**The Yalta and Potsdam decisions continue to have a good influence on the international situation. Wartime cooperation is still an effective force today.**

There exists, however, a different point of view. Without exaggerating the significance of what was achieved at Yalta and Potsdam, and without glossing over the contradictions the conferences reflected, those subscribing to this point of view see the results of the conferences as an important achievement in organising mutually beneficial cooperation of countries with different social and political systems. The example of such cooperation, in their opinion, is not merely praiseworthy; its beneficial effect can be felt today, for the ideals and principles endorsed at the Allied conferences of 1945 have continued to exert a favourable impact on the international situation in the postwar decades.

Forty years is not a short time. Let us recall that a mere twenty-one years separate the First World War from the Second. We cannot say that since the end of the Second World War there have been no major military conflicts that posed a danger to all nations. There were, for example, the wars in Korea and Vietnam, and the Caribbean crisis that put the world on the brink of a nuclear catastrophe. But a world war has been avoided. Whatever the enemies of Yalta and Potsdam may say, the great merit of the conferences' agreements is that they have prevented the international situation from sliding toward chaos similar to that of the 1930s.

Far from all analysts in the West agree with this point of view. More widespread is the notion, one backed by official circles, that the decisive factor in preserving peace has been the policy of "containment" of what the arch-reactionaries call "Soviet ex-



pansionism" and "Soviet military threat". Needless to say, this notion does not recognise the peace-making, constructive role of the Yalta and Potsdam decisions. The dispute around these two diametrically opposite views regarding essential aspects of post-war world development is likely to continue for some time. And it would be useful to trace the major stages of development of international relations over the last few decades.

First of all, let us look at what is probably the most outstanding event of those years. Thirty years after Yalta and Potsdam the leaders of 33 European states, the United States and Canada gathered in Helsinki for a meeting that represented, as it were, a direct continuation of Yalta and Potsdam. The meeting, officially known as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, ended on August 1, 1975 with the signing of the Final Act at the Finlandia Palace. The conference, which opened in Helsinki in the summer of 1973, was preceded by wide-ranging and open discussions that had lasted for a decade or so. It should be said that the amount of effort put in at Helsinki corresponded to the magnitude and significance of the set task: to find the common denominator of the vital interests of all European countries—socialist and capitalist, big and small, those that are members of alliances and those that pursue a policy of neutrality or non-alignment. The Final Act of the Helsinki Conference has been rightly called a charter of lasting peace and fruitful cooperation among the European nations, for that was its chief purpose.

The climax of the European Conference in Helsinki: heads of state and government of 33 European countries, the United States and Canada, sign the Final Act



It can be said (with account taken of the conditions of today) that it carried forward the basic principles of the Anglo-American Atlantic Charter of 1941, to which the Soviet Union subscribed. The aims set in the Atlantic Charter—to establish a peace that would enable the world's nations to live in security, knowing neither fear nor poverty, to renounce the use of force and rid mankind of the burden of armaments—coincided with the aims set by the participants in the Helsinki Conference.

The Final Act of the European conference of 1975 was based on a programme of action collectively drawn up and aimed at safeguarding peace and security and promoting mutually beneficial ties among the participating countries, which held advanced positions in the world because of their high level of economic development. The text of the Final Act was adopted by consensus; that is, it was unanimously approved—every clause and phrase—by all participants in the conference. The efforts that this required can be judged from the following figures: at the conference's second stage alone, which took place in Geneva in the years 1973-1975, about 2,500 sessions, not counting unofficial meetings, were held, attended by about 400 delegates and 300 Secretariat members from all participating countries and nearly 5,000 documents were distributed.

The results of the Helsinki Conference were truly momentous. The participating states undertook "to exert efforts to make detente both a continuing and an increasingly viable and com-



prehensive process, universal in scope". To this end they pledged to abide by and carry into practice certain fundamental principles which had for many years been regarded as desirable but unrealisable ideals, namely: respect by all states for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries; the inviolability of frontiers; renunciation of the use or threat of force; and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Incidentally, the Soviet government has advocated these principles ever since it came into being in 1917. At Yalta and Potsdam Soviet diplomats were guided by these principles in working out measures for a postwar settlement.

**The Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is a development in new circumstances of the major principles of the Atlantic Charter and contains a programme of action to ensure peace and security and promote useful ties between all countries.**

Thus, thirty years after the end of the Second World War the principles underlying the Yalta and Potsdam agreements were reaffirmed by a multilateral international document of tremendous moral and political significance. One might object that in many respects the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act have not yet been fulfilled. The answer to this is: they have not only been put down on paper and endorsed by the heads of government and state of 35 countries who affixed their signatures to the Final Act, but impel them to greater efforts to turn these commitments into reality. It requires an effort to implement them, just as it does to this day to materialise the essence of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements.

**Washington abandoned the principles of cooperation worked out by the Allies in wartime. Its aim was to strengthen its own imperialist positions.**

As we have seen, the Yalta and Potsdam decisions had many opponents, both overt and covert. The results of the Second World War forced the US government to adapt its foreign-policy doctrines, its strategy and tactics, to the new conditions, and above all to re-examine US relations with the Soviet Union. Now that the threat posed by Nazi Germany and militarist Japan had been eliminated, many Washington politicians considered cooperation with the Soviet Union to be unnecessary and even harmful. They were not concerned about cooperation and the search for mutually acceptable ways of peaceful coexistence, their wish was to reduce as much as they could the opportunities for development of the USSR and other socialist countries, and to strengthen US positions in the international arena.

The United States believed that with Germany and Japan defeated, and with Britain and France weakened as world powers as a result of the war, it had become the undisputed leader of the world. Taking upon itself the role of defender of the socio-economic status quo in the industrial countries of the West, Washington sought to impose on them its own policies and its own conditions for cooperation. But the countries of Central and South-Eastern Europe countered this US policy with growing cooperation with the Soviet Union.

The new US leaders oriented themselves not towards peaceful development of relations with other countries, but towards the use of force. Two days before the signing of the act of surrender of Japan, President Truman told members of his Administration: "If we were to maintain leadership among other nations, we must continue to be strong in a military way."<sup>1</sup> Thus, military force was proclaimed an important instrument of US foreign policy. Truman stated that the military policy of the US must fully agree with its foreign policy which, in turn, must take into account US military potentialities and the strategic power of US armed forces.

Meanwhile London was hoping to bolster up its war-weakened positions on the international scene by aggravating US-Soviet relations. In its opinion it was in Britain's interests that there should be growing friction between the world's two largest powers, and thus it put tension in international relations on the agenda of its foreign policy. This found expression primarily in abandonment of tripartite cooperation—a move that contravened the Yalta and Potsdam agreements.

In August 1945 the US government, and following it the British government, again demanded the reorganisation of the governments in Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania. *The New York Times* described this as "the start of an Anglo-American diplomatic offensive" in Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> At the London session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (September-October 1945), set up under the Potsdam agreements to draft peace treaties, Washington, with London's support, began to insist on a revision of the Potsdam agreements with the intention, as one American participant in the talks subsequently put it, of placing a foot in the door leading to Eastern Europe. The American delegation's categorical demand for a reorganisation of the Romanian and Bulgarian governments according to the standards of "Western democracy" was rejected by the Soviet side, which pointed out: "The Romanian people like their government, the US Administration does not. What is one to do? The US Administration's dislike for the present government of Romania is no valid reason for toppling it and installing another government that would be unfriendly towards the Soviet Union. In such a matter we cannot offer any help to the American delegation."

The Soviet delegation called on all parties to strictly abide by the Potsdam decisions. In response the Western side halted the Council's work under the pretext that the Soviet Union was "intractable". John Foster Dulles who participated in the London session subsequently concluded: "Our action at the London meeting has had momentous consequences—as we realised it would have. It marked the end of an epoch, the epoch of Teheran, Yalta, Potsdam."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Truman, *op. cit.* p. 510.

<sup>2</sup> *The New York Times*, August 26, 1945, p. E 5.

<sup>3</sup> John Foster Dulles, *War or Peace*, N. Y., 1957, p. 30.



As Washington departed further and further from the line mapped out at Yalta and Potsdam, it deliberately took a course towards exacerbating relations with the USSR and repudiating its Allied obligations. In so doing it gambled on its monopoly on atomic weapons. On November 28, 1945 a leading member of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, Edwin Johnson, said that "the atomic bomb in the hands of the United States" would be the "club" of American diplomacy.<sup>1</sup>

Churchill's speech in Fulton on March 5, 1946 was virtually a denunciation of the Yalta and Potsdam decisions. In the presence of President Truman Churchill called on the US and British governments to take a hard line towards the USSR, threatened to use the American A-bomb and insisted on the formation of a military alliance to confront the USSR. In Moscow the Fulton speech was correctly evaluated as an instigation of an atomic war against the Soviet Union. No wonder this speech has gone down in history as the beginning of the "cold war".

But the Soviet Union did not give up hopes that cooperation would continue. The Soviet government carried out its programme of demobilising troops and putting industry on a peacetime basis. The USSR took an active part in the work of the United Nations, which had just begun to function. The Soviet representative, Andrei Gromyko, told the first session of the UN General Assembly: "The success of the new organisation will directly depend on how much consideration is given to the experience of cooperation among the democratic countries during the war and on how long the member nations will engage in genuine cooperation."

**Churchill's Fulton speech was a "cold war" manifesto. The West set up the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation against the USSR, while Moscow called for a continuation of wartime cooperation.**

The feasibility of cooperation of states with different social systems was confirmed by the implementation of the programme of action charted at Yalta and Potsdam: the Allied Control Council for Germany and the Allied Council for Austria were functioning; negotiations were in progress on the drafting of peace treaties with Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Italy and Finland (the treaties came into force on September 15, 1947); and talks were continuing on the principles of Allied policy towards Japan and on Korea's future. The effectiveness of the policy of cooperation corroborated by the Yalta and Potsdam decisions was making itself felt in spite of all obstacles put in the way of that policy.

The situation became complicated, however, with the founding in April 1949 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which was clearly aimed at intensifying military confrontation with the Soviet Union. There is ample evidence that NATO was

<sup>1</sup> See D. F. Fleming, *The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917-1960*, London, 1961, Vol. 1, pp. 336-337.

conceived primarily as an instrument for preparing war against the USSR. For example, the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee (US House of Representatives), said that Washington would use NATO to obtain air bases on the European continent from where air strikes could be made on Moscow and other cities in the Soviet Union. Thus, Washington's foreign-policy planning was still centred on the US monopoly on the A-bomb.

The Soviet Union made every effort to prevent the world from being split into two opposing military-political groupings. In January 1949 it proposed to the great powers that a peace pact along the line of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements be concluded, which would be a concrete embodiment of the ideas of peaceful coexistence. The response from the American capital, which came a few days later, was a flat refusal to discuss this proposal. The USSR then put forward a proposal at the UN General Assembly calling on the great powers to conclude a pact on strengthening peace. The Western powers turned down this proposal, too. After that the Soviet Union made it clear that it considered the establishment of NATO to mean that its members had broken with the policy which was pursued by the members of the anti-Nazi coalition in the war years and which found reflection in the Yalta and Potsdam decisions and in the Allied treaties that the USSR signed with Great Britain in 1942 and with France in 1944. At the same time the Soviet government emphasised that it would continue to adhere to that policy.

NATO represented a separate military bloc whose very existence ran counter to the principle of peaceful coexistence of the great powers—a principle which, it may be recalled, had been valued so highly by the British and American governments. The North Atlantic Treaty, a special statement of the Soviet Foreign Ministry pointed out, met the "aggressive ambitions to establish Anglo-American world domination". The statement exposed the attempts to conceal the incompatibility of the Treaty with the UN Charter, whose principles had been approved by the Allies at Yalta. But now, the statement continued, the United States, Britain and France had "returned to the old anti-Soviet foreign-policy course, aimed at isolating the USSR, which they conducted in the years preceding the Second World War and which almost brought European civilisation to a catastrophe."

**The Western powers were out to split Germany, disregarding the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. The Soviet Union continued the struggle for the unity of Germany.**

It was no accident that the establishment of NATO coincided with a sharp aggravation of differences between the Allies over the German question, or rather with the Western powers' actions aimed at partitioning Germany, which amounted to a complete repudiation of the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. Meanwhile it was clear that only the observance of these agreements could ensure that Germany would become a peace-loving state, which was the cornerstone for a lasting peace in Europe. That was how President Roosevelt had viewed the matter. Shortly before his death he emphasised that fulfilment of the Allied agreements on



Germany "will determine the fate of the United States—and of the world—for generations to come."

Indeed, to ensure a lasting world peace and international security it was necessary to root out German militarism as a source of war in Europe and, consequently to bring about a democratic transformation of life in Germany. The road to this was indicated by the principles proclaimed at Potsdam and in quadripartite Allied agreements. In accordance with the joint Allied policy, already by mid-1945 local self-government bodies had been formed in all parts of the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany, and later also regional administrative bodies, and the formation of political parties and trade unions was permitted. In strict observance of the German people's right to self-determination, the Soviet authorities made it possible for the inhabitants in the zone to resolve questions of socio-economic transformations themselves. Within three years an agrarian reform was carried out in the Soviet occupation zone, which put an end to the domination of the reactionary landlords in the countryside, who were among the chief supporters of militarism. The property of war criminals and Nazi functionaries was handed over to self-government bodies. The armed forces were disbanded and the military industry dismantled. By December 1, 1947, according to the Control Council, the demilitarisation of East Germany had been completed.

The US occupation authorities did things in a different way. As early as the autumn of 1946, during a tour of the western part of Germany, travelling in what used to be Hitler's personal train, US Secretary of State Byrnes said in a speech in Stuttgart on September 6 that Washington intended to repudiate the Yalta and Potsdam decisions and stop fulfilling its commitments regarding Germany. The speech contained a virtual refusal to recognise Poland's western frontiers demarcated after the war; this gave encouragement to the revanchist elements. In the western occupation zones the Potsdam decisions concerning the prohibition of all types of militarist activity remained unfulfilled; the process of liquidating the military-industrial monopolies was virtually disrupted, and denazification came to a standstill. The work of the Allied Control Council as a body operative throughout Germany was openly obstructed.

But even in these conditions political and economic questions affecting the future of a unified Germany remained on the agenda of the sessions of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the four powers and of the sittings of the Control Council, although the Western powers repeatedly resorted to obstructionistic tactics at these meetings. In the summer of 1946 the Soviet Union proposed to its Allies the setting up, first, of a central administration and then of an all-German government with which a peace treaty would be concluded and which would be responsible for the fulfilment of Germany's obligations under this treaty. Noting that in the West there was again talk about the partition of Germany into "autonomous" states, the Soviet representatives stressed that "the destruction of Germany should not be part of our task if we want to have peace and tranquillity".

The Soviet proposal was rejected as a result of objections raised by Paris and London. Bypassing the Control Council, the United States and Britain signed an agreement, of which France became a signatory later on, on uniting their occupation zones. The question of the dismemberment of Germany was virtually decided by the Western powers by the beginning of 1947. In March of the same year a report by former US President Herbert G. Hoover, who had made a trip to the western zones of Germany, was published in the United States. In it Hoover put forward a plan which in effect laid the basis for the subsequent actions of the Western powers: the setting up of a special German government for the western zones, the conclusion of a separate peace treaty with it, and implementation of a monetary reform in that part of Germany.

Nevertheless, the Soviet government continued its fight for the unity of Germany. At the Moscow session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in March-April 1947 it called on the Western powers to abandon separatist, divisive activities and proposed that preparations get under way without delay for the formation of an all-German government, that all-German administrative departments be set up, an interim democratic constitution be drawn up and that, in accordance with it, free elections be held in all zones. At the next session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in November-December 1947, the Soviet government, proceeding from the Yalta and Potsdam decisions, proposed taking immediate measures to conclude a peace treaty with Germany to be drafted with the participation of an all-German democratic government. The West responded by disrupting the session. In this connection the US press made it clear that the days of Yalta were over and that the dismemberment of Germany would enable the United States to put West Germany firmly in the Western orbit.

Subsequently the West carried out the following measures: a monetary reform in West Germany and West Berlin, which disrupted normal economic ties between the country's different regions; the drawing up of a West German constitution endorsed by the Commanders-in-Chief of US, British and French troops in Germany; dissolution of the Allied Control Council for Germany; the holding of elections to the parliament of the West German separatist state; and, finally, the formation of the government of the Federal Republic of Germany on September 20, 1949.

Thus, Germany ceased to exist as a single whole. On October 7, 1949, the People's Council issued a manifesto proclaiming the formation in the eastern part of the state of the German Democratic Republic, which was immediately recognised by the Soviet Union. Such is the true history of the partition of Germany into two separate states, whatever was said about it subsequently in the West.

In the chain of events that make up current affairs sometimes an unexpected turn takes place which sharply changes the alignment of forces. One such event occurred in August 1949 when the Soviet Union announced its first atomic weapon test. After this



the Western leaders had had to make a reappraisal of past developments and to cancel a few things from what they had confidently planned for the future.

President Truman remarked to this effect that the West's atomic monopoly had come to an end, and it had come sooner than Western experts had expected.

Churchill's dream, for example, could never come true: "The nuclear age," he wrote, "transformed the relations between the Great Powers... It even occurred to me that an announced but peaceful aerial demonstration over the main Soviet cities, coupled with the outlining to the Soviet leaders of some of our newest inventions, would produce in them a more friendly and sober attitude." But the British Prime Minister had to admit that the Russians had "removed the point of this idea".<sup>1</sup>

This was not merely indulging in reveries. The United States and some other Western countries openly rejected the general line pursued at Yalta and Potsdam and took a negative approach immediately after the war to the question of banning atomic weapons and reducing armaments.

**In 1946 the Soviet Union proposed to ban the production and use of atomic weapons. Had this first "zero" proposal been accepted, mankind would have been rid of the dangers and anxieties caused by the possibility of a nuclear war breaking out.**

It was stated in the Moscow Declaration of the Four States (the USSR, the United States, Britain and China) on the Question of General Security, adopted on October 30, 1943, that the governments of these countries "will confer and cooperate with each other... to bring about a practicable general agreement with respect to the regulation of armaments in the postwar period". To carry out this commitment and in view of the development of atomic weapons, it was decided in December 1945 at the meeting of foreign ministers of the Soviet Union, the United States and Britain to set up within the framework of the United Nations an Atomic Energy Commission. This Commission subsequently became the scene of confrontation between two policies on the question of atomic weapons.

On June 14, 1946 Washington came out with the Baruch Plan (named after the author Bernard Baruch). It envisaged a general ban on the building of national atomic industries and "international" control over the production of fissionable materials, but made no mention of the atomic weapons that the United States alone possessed at that time. Thus, adoption of the Baruch Plan would have meant endorsement of the US monopoly on atomic weapons (according to a US State Department document, the plan did not require that the United States should stop producing atomic weapons<sup>2</sup>), and it would also have meant interference in the domestic affairs of other countries under the cover of "supranational" control, and in the long run—

<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, London, 1959, p. 965.

<sup>2</sup> See: *A Report on the International Control of Atomic Energy*, Washington, London, 1946, p. VI.

interference in their economic development. This was a blatant violation of the Allied agreements of the war years on respect for the right of nations to determine their internal development and their future themselves.

In its proposal put forward five days after the American one Moscow took a fundamentally different approach to the question of atomic weapons. The Soviet proposal was a simple and practicable one—to conclude an International Convention to Prohibit the Production and Employment of Weapons Based on the Use of Atomic Energy for the Purpose of Mass Destruction. Violation of the Convention was considered "a heinous international crime against mankind". Looking back now, and taking into account the complex and dramatic experience that the world's nations have undergone over these past decades, we can see that the adoption of the Soviet proposal would have rid mankind of the terrifying dangers it faces today. The political leaders of the West then lacked the good will and foresight to comprehend this, and anyway they were preoccupied with something else. The US representative to the United Nations, Henry C. Lodge, said that the United States would not undertake obligations that prevented the use of nuclear weapons. The US stand on the problem of the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons was at that time as irrationally uncompromising as it is today.

This problem is inseparable from the general question of arms limitation and disarmament which was a subject of inter-Allied discussions during the war years and which later found reflection in the United Nations Charter. In the immediate postwar years it was not so acute as it became later, for in those years the postwar process of demobilisation of the armed forces and of economic reconstruction on a peace footing was under way. Nevertheless, the problem existed. Foreseeing its growing importance in the years ahead, the Soviet government, at the first session of the UN General Assembly in 1946, raised the question of the reduction of armaments and armed forces and the banning of the production and use of atomic energy for military purposes with appropriate international control.

**US military intervention in Korea was a result of the separatist course taken by Washington in Far Eastern affairs back in 1945. US attempts to annex North Korea were in vain.**

But disarmament ran counter to US plans of political and economic expansion in Europe, Asia and other parts of the world, of attaining military superiority over the USSR by speeding up the production of atomic weapons, building a ramified network of military bases in the territories of other nations, and forming new military-political alliances and groupings. Hence its opposition to all peace proposals, including the Soviet proposal of 1948 on the reduction by one-third of all ground, naval and air forces of the permanent members of the UN Security Council—the USSR, the United States, Britain, France and China.

The US military intervention in Korea in the summer of 1950 aggravated the already tense international relations, ushered in a



new stage in the worldwide arms race and made it even more difficult to achieve disarmament.

The events in Korea were directly connected with the disintegration of the Japanese colonial empire after Japan's defeat in the war, and with the general upsurge of the liberation movement in countries of the Far East and South-East Asia following the just war waged by the nations in the anti-Nazi coalition. But this upsurge stood in the way of Washington's plans to broaden US influence in the Far East and the Pacific region. With a view to carrying out these plans Washington turned down Moscow's proposal on the participation of Soviet troops in the occupation of Japan, and also the Soviet proposal of 1946 on the conclusion between the United States, Britain, the USSR and China of a treaty on the disarming and demilitarisation of Japan. The United States, however, could not prevent Soviet troops from entering northern Korea during the disarming of Japanese troops.

When the "cold war" becomes a shooting war: fighting in Korea in 1951



The defeat of Guomindang troops in the civil war in China and the establishment of the People's Republic of China made Washington revise its policy in the Far East; it now put even greater emphasis on enhancing its influence in Japan and South Korea. To this end Washington blatantly violated the Potsdam agreements which stipulated that no separate peace treaties should be concluded with enemy states. The United States argued that it was impossible to work out the terms of a peace treaty that would satisfy all the parties concerned. Thus, there came into being the San Francisco Peace Treaty with Japan, which the Soviet Union, India, Burma and some other countries refused to sign. This treaty ultimately became the US-Japanese "security treaty", which in effect enabled Japan to revive its former military might.

Meanwhile the United States, having landed troops in southern Korea after Japan's surrender in 1945, was seeking to gain control of the whole of the country. Going back on its promises given in the Cairo and Potsdam declarations on the granting of independence to the Korean people, Washington now proposed establishing an international trusteeship over Korea. The Soviet Union could not agree to such a colonialist scheme, and at the Moscow meeting of the foreign ministers of the three powers in December 1945 secured the adoption of a decision on the formation of a provisional all-Korea democratic government that would take over the administration of the country. The United States sabotaged this decision, rejected the Soviet proposal for the withdrawal of Soviet and US troops from Korea, and, in contravention of all previous agreements on the question, installed a puppet government in South Korea in 1948. The US actions resulted in the partition of the country into two parts.

This was followed by the conclusion of a secret US-South Korean military agreement aimed, as subsequent events showed, at the annexation of North Korea (which was by that time a sovereign state—the People's Democratic Republic of Korea) and at preparing for a war against the People's Republic of China. By unleashing a civil war in June 1950 the South Korean authorities backed by the United States turned the Korean peninsula into an arena of a fierce international conflict but in the end failed to attain the aims of its Washington masters. Soviet and Chinese assistance to the People's Democratic Republic of Korea frustrated the plan to annex North Korea; after three years of fighting the initiators of the war had to be content with an armistice along the demarcation line, which in the main coincided with the prewar frontier between the two parts of Korea.

**The war in Korea, the founding of NATO and West Germany's joining NATO were landmarks along the road to the "cold war" and escalation of the arms race.**

The war in Korea and the establishment of NATO marked the beginning of a period of fierce "cold war" and accelerated arms race, including nuclear arms race. The Yalta and Potsdam agreements on cooperation in the name of peace and security of nations seemed to have been forgotten completely. West Germany's membership in NATO, which became official on May 5, 1955 in contravention to the Allies' pledges, increased the already growing threat to world peace. Thus, warnings against a remilitarised West Germany voiced earlier proved to be well-founded. The prediction made by the French paper *Le Monde* back in 1949 came true. "The North Atlantic Treaty," it wrote, "provides for the future armament of West Germany; this is as true as the fact that each egg contains an embryo."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet government repeatedly warned the governments of the United States, Britain and France that by reviving German militarism in West Germany and by concluding a military alliance with the Federal Republic of Germany they were assuming a grim

<sup>1</sup> *Le Monde*, April 6, 1949.



responsibility before the world's nations for the consequences of their moves. The Soviet Union called on the Western powers to return to the joint Allied policy of the war years. But when its insistent calls were ignored it was compelled to take action. On May 7, 1955 Moscow denounced the Soviet-British and Soviet-French treaties of 1942 and 1944, in which the signatories pledged to cooperate in the postwar period for the sake of preserving peace and resisting aggression and not to form alliances directed against any one of the signatories. At a conference held in Warsaw on May 14, 1955 eight socialist countries signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, which came to be known as the Warsaw Treaty. The formation of the military-political alliance of the European socialist countries six years after NATO came into being was a measure taken in retaliation to the activity of the North Atlantic Alliance and other militarist associations and forces in the West. In the international situation that took shape subsequently the Warsaw Treaty Organisation in effect carried out the peace-keeping obligations which the participants in the anti-Nazi coalition had undertaken for the postwar period.

The events of spring 1955 may be said to mark the end of the first postwar period in international relations. The alignment of forces in the world arena was basically different from that in 1945; the balance of forces had radically changed on a regional and, consequently, also on an international scale. New serious problems appeared before mankind, the chief among them being the preservation and strengthening of peace and the prevention of a new war, a thermonuclear war this time. There began a new era in weaponry: the arsenals of states began to be filled with thermonuclear weapons with an explosive power hundreds and thousands of times greater than that of the first atomic bombs, as well as with new delivery vehicles in the form of intercontinental ballistic missiles.

**In September 1959 the Soviet Union proposed averting the threat of thermonuclear catastrophe by embarking on general and complete disarmament.**

On September 19, 1959 the Soviet Union submitted to the UN General Assembly a draft Declaration on General and Complete Disarmament. Essentially it called on all states to abolish their armed forces and destroy their armaments so that they would no longer possess the means of warfare. Returning to this proposal nearly 25 years later, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko told a press conference in Moscow: "When it became clear that other states intended to drag out a solution of the disarmament problems under various pretexts (specification of proportions, how to approach the reduction of this or that type of armaments, how to combine all this), that is, when under the pretext of the complexity of the issue they began to obstruct a solution of these problems, the Soviet Union said: Let's stop arguing, let's get down to business and work for general and complete disarmament." Since the Western powers constantly raised the question of monitoring the implementation of disarmament measures, and

since the Soviet Union itself was no less interested in effective verification procedures, the Soviet government proposed that strict control over disarmament should be exercised by a special international agency consisting of representatives of all states and possessing the widest powers.

This proposal marked a new stage in the struggle to rid mankind of the growing burden of the arms race and of the threat of wars of extermination. It fully accorded with the spirit of the Allied agreements of the war years and received worldwide support. In its resolution on this proposal the UN General Assembly emphasised that "the question of general and complete disarmament is the most important one facing the world today".

The Western powers supported in principle the idea of general and complete disarmament but seemed unable to make up their mind on Moscow's proposal or perhaps did not wish to accept it. Nor did they follow suit when the Soviet Union unilaterally reduced the size of its armed forces by approximately one-third in 1960. And the West failed to reply to the next Soviet proposals which translated into concrete terms the Soviet plan for general and complete disarmament, with account taken of the relevant points made by the United States and other Western powers.

Given good will,  
very difficult  
problems can be  
solved:  
representatives of  
many countries  
at the ceremony  
of the signing in  
Moscow of the  
Treaty Banning  
Nuclear Weapon  
Tests in the  
Atmosphere, in  
Outer Space and  
under Water



The USSR went even further towards meeting the wishes of the West, of the United States and Britain in particular, in its Basic Provisions of a Treaty on General and Complete Disarmament, which it submitted to the United Nations in the autumn of 1960 and supplemented with detailed proposals on control over disarmament by international inspection teams. But since the US Administration was unwilling to take any decision on this issue, the UN General Assembly was unable in 1960 to map out measures leading to disarmament. Some progress was



made only in general discussions of disarmament issues during bilateral Soviet-American consultations in the summer and autumn of 1961.

In the next period too the Soviet Union continued to work for the adoption of concrete measures leading to a sizable reduction in armaments and to disarmament. The struggle for an end to the arms race, both in nuclear and conventional weapons, and for disarmament—all the way to general and complete disarmament—has always been one of the most important lines in the foreign-policy activity of the CPSU and the Soviet state. This struggle has brought results in a number of areas.

**The question of European security—a main subject of discussion at Yalta and Potsdam—was bound up with the German question. The Soviet Union proposed the draft of a German peace treaty. The West rejected it.**

On August 5, 1963 representatives of the USSR, the United States and Britain signed in Moscow a Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, to which more than a hundred states have since acceded. The treaty not only serves to rid mankind of radioactive fallout from nuclear explosions; it is also a step toward solving other complex international problems.

In 1968 the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was open to all states for signing; the overwhelming majority of the world's nations have since signed it. By playing a leading role and showing initiative in the effort to halt the arms race and achieve results towards that end, the Soviet Union, in cooperation with other peace-loving states, promoted in every possible way implementation of the Yalta conference mandate, which is to fulfill the highest aspiration of man—the achievement of a stable and lasting peace.

As already noted, the German question had for many decades been one of the vexations in postwar international relations. The admittance of West Germany to NATO, which marked the beginning of its accelerated remilitarisation in defiance of the Yalta and Potsdam decisions, added a new dimension to the question of the unification of Germany. The participation of the two German states—the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic—in opposing military-political alliances sharply reduced the possibility of such unification. From then on the German question became part of the larger question of European security.

The Western powers, however, showed no desire to consider the question of German unification within the context of European security, and continued to insist—as they did before West Germany joined NATO—on the holding of all-German elections. The West German government, then headed by Konrad Adenauer, behaved as if the defeat of Germany and its unconditional surrender were insignificant events of the distant past. Under these circumstances the Soviet Union supported the idea put forward by the German Democratic Republic of establishing a German Confederation on the basis of non-participation of

both German states in military alliances, and proposed the drafting of a peace treaty with the participation of representatives of both German states. It was also proposed that West Berlin be made a free demilitarised city. Having received no definite answer to its proposals, in January 1959 the Soviet Union put forward the draft of a German peace treaty that took account of the interests of the two German states as well as of the interests of countries that fell victim to aggression on the part of Nazi Germany. This draft was rejected by the West German authorities. It finally became impossible to reach a joint decision on the problem inherited from the Second World War, and other means had to be found for safeguarding security in Europe.

The solution lay in the setting up of an effective system of collective security in Europe, a system that would reduce the level of confrontation between the two military groupings. The concept of such a system was not new and had been much discussed in the years preceding the Second World War. In the second half of the 20th century it acquired new significance. Such a security system could be built only on an all-European scale, i.e., on the basis of cooperation between East and West European states belonging to different social systems.

**The search for ways of achieving European security led to the relaxation of international tension. The socialist countries proposed holding a conference on security and cooperation in Europe.**

It would be incorrect to say that until then nobody had thought about collective security, which in the final count was what the discussions at Yalta and Potsdam about ensuring a lasting peace were all about. The question of joint actions to strengthen European peace was in the background of all discussions on a postwar settlement and on formalising the new realities created on the continent by the war. The only difference was that now that question had come to the forefront and the approach to the other problems hinged on it.

At the session of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member states held in Bucharest in July 1966, the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community came out with a Declaration on the Strengthening of Peace and Security in Europe, which put forward the idea of convening a European conference on this subject. Though at first it met with mistrust and scepticism on the part of the Western powers, the idea began to win more and more support. It took years of discussion, often complicated and strenuous, which Moscow and its allies persistently and patiently promoted, before the idea of holding a European conference on security and cooperation began to be appreciated by Western governments. It was not until a military-strategic equilibrium was established between the United States and the Soviet Union, between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, that realistic-minded politicians in the West ventured to reconsider their "cold war" dogma according to which negotiations with Moscow should only be conducted from a "position of strength". A general improvement in the international climate and increased contacts at the highest level



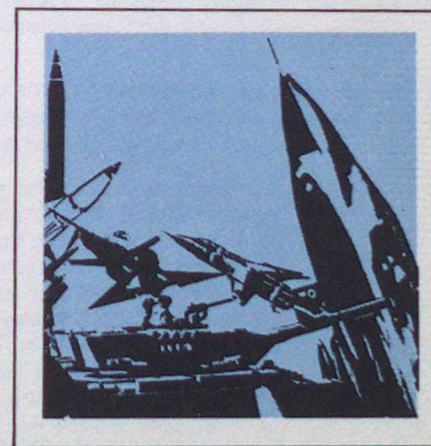
paved the way toward a more realistic assessment of the threat to world peace posed by the exacerbation of tension and aggravation of the military-political confrontation.

Was the East-West detente of the 1970s a deviation from the basic law of international life, and was the idea of collective security as ephemeral as the conditions that produced it? Or were the tendencies of the last decade brought forth by the motive forces of world social development, forces more vital than those leading to confrontation, the nuclear arms race and the illusory drive for military superiority?

Arguments over these issues show no sign of abating. Like the arguments over the historic importance of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, they reflect the struggle between two different approaches to the future of mankind—peaceful cooperation of sovereign and equal nations, and an endless attempt to impose one's own will on other nations, a struggle that has dominated postwar world developments. It was at the centre of diplomatic battles of the last few decades and finally led to the Helsinki agreements of 1975, which are in line with the Yalta and Potsdam agreements of forty years ago. This is not surprising, for the 1945 and 1975 agreements were concluded thanks to the same idea of ensuring the equal security of all nations.

## CHAPTER IV

# CLOUDS GATHER OVER THE WORLD



The greater the departure from the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, the more dangerous the world situation becomes



Here are some comparisons.

The anti-fascist coalition of states in the Second World War was a complex phenomenon in international relations. It united forces whose interests converged at some points and diverged at others. But the very fact that such a coalition was established was evidence that the basic objectives of its members—the routing of the common enemy and organisation of peaceful cooperation after the war—prevented the contradictions between them from growing into conflicts and prompted them to settle their differences by seeking mutually acceptable solutions.

Similarly, there was and still is convergence as well as divergence of interests among the 35 socialist and capitalist states which met at Helsinki. But their common interest in preventing a world nuclear war and in developing mutually beneficial peaceful cooperation gained the upper hand and they were able to find solutions acceptable to all. Showing political realism, the participants in the Helsinki process formulated their goals and plans taking into account the actual state of things and, whenever necessary, adapted their positions to it.

During the Second World War major changes took place in international relations which affected the results of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences. The Soviet Union's role in international affairs had grown, and millions of people in different countries became involved in politics and began to have an ever greater influence on the foreign-policy course of their governments. Similarly, the growing influence of the forces of peace, progress and socialism in subsequent decades determined the approach to ways of ensuring European and international security, which are outlined in the Helsinki Final Act.

Forty years ago Yalta and Potsdam summed up the experience of cooperation between the members of the anti-Nazi coalition, which convincingly shows that difference in social systems is not an insurmountable obstacle to joint struggle against aggression, for peace, for international and European security.

**At a time of rapid and dangerous development of armaments the Helsinki agreements affirm that peace and the security of nations are the collective responsibility of all states. The ten principles of interstate relations in the nuclear age.**

Thirty years later the Helsinki agreements reaffirmed the principle of collective responsibility of states with different social systems for the safeguarding of peace and security in an epoch of revolutionary changes in social life and the development of weapons of mass destruction. The Yalta and Potsdam decisions provided guidelines for establishing a postwar order; the Helsinki Final Act defines the basic principles of inter-state relations with the aim of ensuring peaceful international development for many years to come. These are: sovereign equality of states, which implies respect for one another's right to choose and develop one's own political, social, economic and cultural systems; renunciation of the use or threat of force, which rules out not only armed violence but also political, economic, financial and other forms of pressure; inviolability of frontiers, that is, recognition of



the existing territorial realities, which meets the interests of all states wishing to live in peace; territorial integrity of states; peaceful settlement of disputes; non-interference in internal affairs.

The Helsinki Final Act, like the Yalta and Potsdam decisions, is a clear expression of political realism and farsightedness. And the more realistic and farsighted the policies of nations are, the greater the possibilities for furthering historical progress in conditions of peace and international cooperation.

There is a cyclic pattern to the development of international relations over the last few decades, with periods of relative calm, of more or less quiet flow of international life giving way to periods of rising tension and conflict, and vice versa. Cooperation between the nations that emerged victorious from the war against fascism and frenzied militarism, a war of unprecedented fierceness, was followed by a "cold war" between the victors. The "cold war" years were marked by violent political disputes and bitter military rivalry which grew into an arms race and even tests of strength, one of which (in Korea) nearly turned into another world war. Fortunately, however, not all the resources of peaceful cooperation that had been accumulated earlier had been expended.

The mid-1950s was a period of thaw and there was an apparent desire on the part of both sides to work out a *modus vivendi* in the new conditions created by nuclear weapons. One began to hear talk about the "spirit of Geneva" in international relations, a reference to the Geneva meeting in 1955 of the leaders of the four great powers—the main signatories of the treaties of the war years. Unfortunately, hopes for broad mutual understanding did not come true, and the horizons of world politics once again came under clouds of mistrust and hostility.

**In the late 1970s and early 1980s international relations again grew particularly difficult and dangerously worsened. The policy mapped out at Yalta and Potsdam and further developed at Helsinki acquired fresh significance.**

The 1970s are rightly called a period of detente. Thanks largely to the persistent effort of the Soviet Union and other peace-loving forces to safeguard security in Europe and in the world as a whole, the situation on the European continent improved. Many problems of European security were resolved in that period.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s international relations once more became complicated and dangerously aggravated. Increasingly active were circles seeking to undermine and destroy the only possible basis of relations between states in an age of nuclear weapons—peaceful coexistence, and to nullify the chief result of the Second World War, namely the provisions for collective security incorporated in the Yalta and Potsdam decisions. These circles resented the improvement in international relations in the preceding decade and systematically attacked the process of detente. In the vanguard of the forces striving to direct world developments along a dangerous path, as their prede-

cessors did in the first postwar years, was again the United States, or, to be more precise, the Republican Administration led by Ronald Reagan which came to power in 1981. Its policies are in many ways similar to those of the Democratic Administration under Truman, which in its day shunned fruitful cooperation among the Allies in the anti-Nazi coalition and tried to distort the principles of the United Nations. Washington's foreign-policy course once again led to a very dangerous aggravation of the international situation.

US actions in the international arena in the early 1980s show that the United States has not only departed from the policy of detente, but has also failed to honour agreements and treaties, ignoring centuries-old standards of international law. Washington has in effect wrecked the 1979 Soviet-US treaty on limiting strategic armaments (SALT-2), a treaty which took years of hard work to prepare and which equally considers the real interests of both countries. The United States also withdrew from a whole series of negotiations on important problems of ending the arms race and from talks that were making good headway or were nearing a successful completion. War preparations on the part of Washington and of the US-led North Atlantic Alliance have reached record intensity; Washington and its NATO allies are openly talking about the possibility of waging a "limited", "protracted" and other kinds of nuclear war. The world's nations are thus confronted with a policy of vigorous preparations for a new world war, this time with the use of nuclear weapons. This policy is sometimes dressed up in phrases about peace, but otherwise no particular attempt is made to disguise it.

The initiators of this policy no longer think it necessary to conceal their real objectives. They have certainly been consistent in pursuing the objectives defined back in the period of the presidential election campaign of 1980. In that year the American journal *Foreign Policy* printed an article by Keith Payne and Colin S. Gray, both in important foreign policy posts under Reagan. "The United States," they wrote, "should plan to defeat the Soviet Union and to do so at a cost that would not prohibit US recovery. Washington should identify war aims that in the last resort would contemplate the destruction of Soviet political authority and the emergence of a postwar world order compatible with Western values."<sup>1</sup> Thus, Reagan's foreign policy objectives were formulated with insolent cynicism, with contempt for the vital interests of the nations and for the realities of today's world.

Needless to say, these US objectives are simply not feasible. Western politicians at the time of the Second World War, or rather those among them who made a realistic assessment of the fascist threat to mankind and formed a military alliance with the USSR, showed far greater understanding of the motive power of world development than the men in the White House today. Even members of Truman's postwar Administration, notwithstanding their exorbitant ambitions, were more broad-minded and realistic

<sup>1</sup> *Foreign Policy*, No. 39, Summer 1980, p. 21.



Soviet leader Yuri Andropov (left) talking in April 1983 with Rudolf Augstein, publisher of *Der Spiegel* magazine: "For us the attainment of agreement between contracting parties means reaching accord on questions concerned to their mutual satisfaction."



The Soviet Union did not have to alter its foreign-policy course. Peace has invariably been its foreign-policy goal from the first days following the October Revolution of 1917, including the period when, in alliance with the other participants in the anti-Nazi coalition, it fought against Nazi tyranny. Soviet policy is principled, consistent and carefully weighed. Today, as forty years ago, it demonstrates that peaceful coexistence is the only rational basis for relations between states with different social systems; there is no, nor can there be any other basis.

The great ideological debate that started nearly seven decades ago between socialist society and capitalist society continues. But

in assessing international affairs. The point is that this way of thinking bodes ill for mankind's future; herein lies its chief danger. A fraction of humanity will presumably survive a nuclear war and emerge from their underground shelters with the composition of their blood changed, and start to lead a vegetative existence in the poisoned atmosphere of a moribund world. That will be the case at best. No wonder millions of people reject such prospects.

The foremost problems on our agenda are the saving of the human race from a nuclear war, normalisation of the international situation and the halting of the suicidal arms race, especially in nuclear weapons. The Soviet Union, together with all states standing for a realistic policy, and with political and social forces of various ideological and religious convictions which have risen against the threat of war, has been conducting a resolute and uncompromising struggle for the preservation of peace, for life on earth. Not everybody understood this at once, and not everybody realises this even today. But what the Soviet Union *does* proves this better than thousands of words.

there is no reason why this debate should turn into a military confrontation, why weapons and a readiness to employ them should be the criterion for measuring the potentialities and strength of the two social systems. The Soviet Union has always rejected the view that everything is and will be decided by force of arms. Hence its invariable denunciation of military competition. An arms race must not be started where it is nonexistent, in space, for example; and it must be halted where it exists.

Moscow believes that the best way to avert wars, including one that could break out accidentally—such a possibility grows with the accumulation in the world of more and more weapons of mass destruction—is to end the arms race and return to normal relations between states, in short, to the policy of detente. Today there are sufficiently clearly-defined principles of normal interstate relations in conditions of the existence of two opposing social systems. Not the least important among them are those underlying the Yalta and Potsdam decisions. Of paramount importance are the principles jointly worked out by 35 states and outlined in the Helsinki Final Act. Whatever the enemies of Yalta, Potsdam and Helsinki may say about these principles, there is no getting away from the fact that they are effective because they are compatible with the objective state of affairs on our planet.

**The urgent task is to save mankind from a nuclear catastrophe, normalise the international situation and end the suicidal arms race.**

The basic principles as applied to contemporary international relations are as follows: there are no world or regional problems that cannot be resolved by peaceful means; all states must recognise in practice the legitimate right of every nation to conduct its domestic affairs without outside interference and to participate in international life on an equal basis with others; no country should try to conduct a policy of hegemony, to establish "spheres of interests" or "spheres of influence"; the preservation of world peace is inseparable from recognition of the equality of all peoples and states; a lasting and just peace is one in which every state recognises and respects the legitimate rights and interests of others. These principles were formulated in the Political Declaration adopted by the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty member states, held in Prague in 1983.

They are applicable to all regions of the world, but particularly to Europe, where any military clash can trigger off a worldwide explosion. US leaders are trying to turn West European countries into their nuclear hostages. But the policy of peaceful coexistence is good for Europe, where states with different social systems have coexisted for many decades, whereas a policy of arms buildup aimed at achieving military superiority, which the United States and some of its allies have followed, can only destabilise the international situation and lead to new upheavals. Indeed, once again there looms the danger of a war—a nuclear war this time—being unleashed from the territory of Germany (to be more precise, from its western part) against the



will of the overwhelming majority of its population and perhaps even without the knowledge of the West German government.

The situation in Europe urgently requires that all states on the continent should join efforts to bring about peace and disarmament. As to the Soviet Union and other countries of the socialist community, they stand for holding and deepening political dialogue and consultations at all levels, for as broad political contacts as possible, which is the only way to ease the present crisis situation.

The Warsaw Treaty states do not seek military superiority over the NATO countries and do not intend to attack them, or any other country in Europe or elsewhere for that matter. Since the NATO countries have also declared that they have no aggressive intentions, the countries of the socialist community have proposed that the two sides conclude a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and maintenance of peaceful relations. This would make it possible to enhance mutual confidence, stop the dangerous development of events and direct them onto a healthy path. On this basis, the authors of the proposal are convinced, it would be possible step by step to carry out the tasks of limiting and reducing the arsenals of arms, both nuclear and conventional.

In the difficult times that have now set in, the Soviet Union, in keeping with its principled policies, has repeatedly expressed a

Prague, January 1983: the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation decides to propose to the NATO countries the joint signing of a treaty on the mutual renunciation of the use of military force and maintenance of peaceful relations



readiness to enter into open and honest cooperation with all countries on a reciprocal basis, and called for the conclusion of agreements based on equality and equal security of the parties concerned. "We are for broad, fruitful cooperation among all nations of the world to their mutual advantage and the good of all mankind, free from diktat and interference in the affairs of other countries," emphasised Yuri Andropov. This kind of cooperation is the real alternative to a nuclear catastrophe.

To settle controversial issues through negotiations is a time-tested method of conducting international affairs; in this case the participants do not set out to attain their aims by fair means or foul but seek reasonable, rational and beneficial results for all sides. On such a basis, as experience has shown, the solutions achieved are viable and long-lasting. This in fact explains why the Yalta and Potsdam decisions, which seem to concern events of bygone days, continue to exercise an influence in our time—a fact which some commentators today find hard to comprehend. Notwithstanding all the differences between them (some of which were profound), the participants in these conferences were aware that unless they came to an understanding the problems would not disappear and would become even more acute.

US policy-makers in the early 1980s failed to learn anything from that historical experience. When they started or resumed talks with the Soviet Union in those years on limiting nuclear weapons the US negotiators from the outset showed no intention



of seeking mutually acceptable solutions. As its behaviour indicated all along, Washington used these talks only to conceal its real aim: to dominate the world militarily. Moscow took a different stand. "Everything that the Soviet Union has done and is doing," Yuri Andropov said, "provides no evidence that it is seeking military superiority. The treaties and agreements which we have made and are ready to make with the USA are aimed at lowering the level of nuclear confrontation without upsetting parity, that is to say, without detriment to the security of either the USSR or the USA." Moscow has not asked the West to disarm unilaterally, but nor will it permit others to press it into unilateral disarmament. Any disruption of the established strategic parity, whether resulting from accelerated "rearmament" of the United States and other NATO countries or from unjustified concessions on the part of the USSR, would only bring the threat of war closer to Europe and the rest of the world. The USSR can on no account allow this to happen. And it has repeatedly warned that it will take all necessary measures to retain the parity.

**The choice is nuclear catastrophe or peaceful coexistence. International cooperation is the only realistic way out of the present dangerous impasse.**

The problem of ending the nuclear arms race is unquestionably of overriding importance today. But questions concerning the territorial-political realities in Europe, to which so much attention was paid at Yalta and Potsdam, are also important. In 1983 the Warsaw Treaty countries spoke of the significance they attached to the strict observance of the relevant treaties and agreements of the postwar years. This was a well timed reminder, considering the fact that the Reagan Administration and the US President's sympathizers in Western Europe, with their fiercely anti-Soviet, anti-socialist policies, were intent on undermining the postwar territorial-political settlement in Europe—a settlement that was unanimously confirmed by the 35 states which signed the Helsinki Final Act of 1975. Almost as soon as the US President had signed this document, Washington began planning to violate it. Today we know that as early as March 1978 Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, Assistant to President Carter for National Security Affairs, prepared a memorandum for the President "proving" that the postwar partition of Europe and the consolidation of the forces of democracy and socialism were of a temporary nature, and that the time had come for the United States to take energetic actions to protect its interests.

The actual development of events shows, however, that US politicians like Brzezinski are indulging in wishful thinking. Never in the centuries-long history of Europe had the frontiers between the European states been so stable as they are today; never had they been acceptable to the European nations to such a degree—a fact that inevitably removes the threat of territorial disputes. But events showed something else too, namely, what underlay Brzezinski's memorandum was a desire among certain circles in the West to call in question the postwar settlement in Europe.

This became clear soon enough. The memorandum said that after analysing the situation in individual countries, one could conclude that Poland was the weakest link among the countries of Eastern Europe. Let us note that this analysis was made in early 1978. And a little more than two years later, when a political crisis in fact emerged in Poland, we knew for certain what Brzezinski had in mind when he advised the President to resort to whatever means in order to advance a pro-Western policy and destabilise the situation in Poland.

Thus, it is obvious that neither Yalta nor Potsdam had or could have anything to do with the cause of the crisis in Poland despite all attempts by Western propaganda to make it appear so. What is more, it is not Poland's internal situation (which, for all its complexity, could be straightened out by normal democratic and peaceful methods), but the determined attempt by the United States and its friends to interfere by whatever means in the internal affairs of a sovereign state that imparted to the Polish crisis a dramatic character. About this there is no doubt. As Polish head of government Wojciech Jaruzelski said in his speech of May 7, 1983 in Warsaw, "they press a button in Washington and cobblestones are used in the streets of Warsaw".

Indeed, from the summer of 1981 Poland became one of the main (if not *the* main) targets in the Reagan Administration's "cold war" against the socialist countries. And the reason lies not in the "evils" of Poland's social system, as anti-socialist information media claim, nor in a lack of freedom in Poland, as Washington, the self-styled champion of freedom, asserts while in actual fact refusing to recognise the right of the Palestinian people, the peoples of Central America and the black majority in South Africa to freedom. "The Polish shortcomings," Jaruzelski said in the same speech, "are not a product of socialism; they are due to a combination of reasons stemming from the complicated centuries-old fortunes of our people."

**The policy of Reagan's Administration and like-minded followers in Europe aims at undermining the postwar territorial and political settlement in Europe, which has for already forty years helped preserve peace on the continent.**

The years that have passed since the start of the Polish crisis have convincingly shown that socialism has taken deep roots in Poland, that it is accepted by the majority of the Polish people as a social system that corresponds to their aspirations. In the final analysis the course of events in Poland in the years of the crisis, if anything, confirmed the correctness of the socialist path which the country had chosen after the tragedy of the Second World War. The prevailing feelings in the country are reflected in this statement by Jaruzelski: "As the Great October Socialist Revolution and the Leninist policy of self-determination of nations had a decisive impact on Poland's gaining independence, the victory over Nazism and the liberation of our country by the Soviet Army and the people's *Wojsko Polskie* fighting together with it made it possible to restore a truly independent sovereign Polish state... There emerged a new people's state of workers and peasants, engaged in building socialism, a new system of social



justice, within new, just and secure borders." On the other hand, the conclusion drawn by Polish communists from the critical events is a logical one: Poland must uphold the positions which it has come to occupy in Europe and in the world since the end of the war. In that struggle all the Warsaw Treaty allies are on the side of the Polish people. They were unanimous on that issue in their Political Declaration of 1983, in which they stressed that all attempts to interfere in matters which are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Polish people "run counter to the generally accepted norms of international relations and will meet with strong opposition".

The European nations have also been gravely alarmed by the revival in recent years of revanchist tendencies among West German reactionaries, tendencies which, unless curbed, could give rise to the kind of danger that the participants in the Yalta and Potsdam conferences had warned against. Thus, among West German right-wingers there has been talk about the "open German question", the "need for reunification", and the like. In this connection we cannot disregard the essentially provocative speech made in early 1983 in Munich by the West German Minister of Internal Affairs, Friedrich Zimmermann, who declared that "the problem of the reunification of Germany embraces not only the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, but also the former east German territories situated on the other side of the Oder-Neisse line". The West German minister from the right-wing camp has thus unwittingly reaffirmed that the Yalta and Potsdam agreements, which have helped to preserve peace in Europe for four decades now, have not lost any of their significance.

**"We are already living in a very fragile world. That is why responsible statesmen must evaluate what is now taking place and adopt a rational decision. It is human reason alone that can and must save mankind from the grave danger,"** Soviet head of state Yuri Andropov said on November 24, 1983.

When working out the programme of the West German coalition government headed by Helmut Kohl, Franz Josef Strauss, the right-wingers' leader, failed, according to the press, to push through his thesis that "the German Reich remains within the frontiers of 1937". His failure, however, does not warrant complacency: we need constantly to bear in mind one of the key postulates of the postwar era, namely respect for the territorial-political realities in today's Europe is an indispensable prerequisite for European peace and security. This confirms the importance of strictly observing the treaties based on these realities, which had been concluded by the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Poland and Czechoslovakia with the Federal Republic of Germany, and also the Quadripartite Agreement on West Berlin.

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Today, as the danger of a new world war grows, so do the forces capable of preventing such a war. The mass peace move-

ment in Europe and throughout the world shows that the peace forces will not endlessly put up with the arms race and war threat. Thus there is a growing conviction that international problems can be solved and tensions overcome, and that world developments can be so managed that they meet the aspirations of the peoples. It is the firm belief of the Soviet government and the Soviet people that the relaxation of international tensions in the 1970s was not a chance episode in postwar history, and that the policy of detente, which is closely related to the basic principles of the peaceful settlement negotiated after the Second World War, is not something that has had its day and is to be forgotten. Over the years of detente all European states saw for themselves the advantages to be gained from it; there is not a single European country whose interests would not be served by cherishing and multiplying the achievements of detente. The future belongs to it. But it will not come by itself: like everything that is praiseworthy in international relations, it has to be fought for with patience and perseverance.